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*De la Patria del Criollo a la Patria del Shumo:*

**Whiteness and the Criminalization of the Dark Plebeian in Modern Guatemala**

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*De la Patria del Criollo a la Patria del Shumo:*

**Whiteness and the Criminalization of the Dark Plebeian in Modern Guatemala**

by

**Jorge Ramón González-Ponciano, Lic.; M.A.**

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## **Preface**

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*De la Patria del Criollo a la Patria del Shumo:*

**Whiteness and the Criminalization of the Dark Plebeian in Modern Guatemala**

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This dissertation explores how the bipolar order of the *Republica de Indios* and the *Republica de Españoles* in Guatemala, created an Indian self as docile and hardworking servant in opposition to the Mestizo caste stigmatized as lazy and rebellious. I analyze the constitution of a paradigmatic Mestizo self as a successful middle class subject, symbolically placed above Indians and Blacks and the efforts aimed at creating a homogeneous nation in Guatemala with the help of US applied anthropology. I describe the proliferation of anti-Indian and anti-mestizo sentiments in current times as a result among several factors, of transnational migration to the US, which is modifying patterns of consumption that favor social mobility, and the socialization of English language in popular settings. In addition, I examine the taxonomy that divides Guatemalan society in *mucos*, *shumos*, *choleros*, *fresas*, *caqueros* and *normales*; and perceptions about what

would happen in Guatemala if Mayas gain more access to the State. As part of my argument that Ladinos should be understood as non-whites, I describe the interactions between popular Ladinos and indigenous residents in a Guatemala City *colonia*, established in the early 1950s on top of the pre-Hispanic city of Kaminal Juyu. Finally, in the context of the absence of *mestizaje indigena* as an official unifier of national identity, I explore the cultural universe of *hijos de la gran puta*, and the way they develop verbal strategies that combine *malas palabras*, grotesqueness, cosmic fear and popular religiosity about the entities of the non-visible world.



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## Introduction

“Oílo vos este indio igualado. Está hablando castilla. ¿Quién le daría permiso?”

*Balún Canán*

Rosario Castellanos (1985)

This dissertation analyzes anti-Indian racism in Guatemala and the repudiation of *indios aladinados* and popular Ladinos, considered non-white by the local elite. I argue that in Guatemala there is a socio-racial hierarchy supported by whiteness that is not visible through the Indian-Ladino dichotomy, utilized for over seventy years for anthropologists who study interethnic relations in Mesoamerica. (Tax 1952 and Redfield 1945)

I explain racism in Guatemala as a result of the hegemonic power of representations that criticize “igualamiento” (Sandoval 1941) and outline the place that everyone has to occupy in society (Durkheim 1987 and Lehmann 1999). These representations form part of the relations of servitude and “cultura finquera” (Tischler 1998) that construct “pure Indians” as obedient and hardworking servants, and *indios aladinados* and working-class Ladinos as lazy and rebellious. This “cultura finquera” sustains much of Guatemalan anti-Indian racism which is a central part of the elite’s hegemony and moral leadership (Gramsci 1983, Jackson Lears 1985, Kang 1997, Kurtz 1996 and Laclau and Mouffe, 1995, and Mouffe 1979) above Ladinos and *indios ladinizados*. That moral leadership and its representations justify the political necessity of dictatorship and the criminalization of the plebeian mass who lack the exotic appeal that has attracted the attention of anthropologists.

In recent years, the moral leadership and the racism of the “cultura finquera” begun to be disrupted by the increasing presence of the indigenous movement, and hegemonic disputes erupted between self-assumed Mayas and non- indigenous Guatemalans representatives of the values granted to “gente decente”. The configuration of a new counter-hegemonic anti-racist contestation in Guatemala merits a re-inscription of hegemony and counter-hegemony as a space of political war and negotiation between contrastive moral leaderships. The new filo-Maya moral leadership is based on language, religion, and ethics and logics of conviviality and sociability that promote collective rights and an expanded vision of social power and political modernization (Warren 1998). If hegemony is to be understood processually (Watanabe 1999), the study of such phenomena as Maya nationalism and the construction of multiculturalism and political pluralism (Smith 1991), should incorporate both ways of being *indigena* and at the same time modern and liberal (Mallon 1994), also the relationship between freedom and citizenship in consumer society (...), and the impact of technology, transnational immigration and social mobility on reshaping symbolic meanings and markers that previously were part of the ideological and material patrimony of the ruling class in Guatemala (Adelman and Aron 1999 and Nelson 1999) . The Diaspora of working-class Mayas and Ladinos throughout North America is producing new meanings and practices that challenge old representations of the place of everyone in society (Burns 1993, Chávez 1990, 1992 and 1994, Chinchilla, Hamilton and Loucky 1993, Dalmage 1993, Faist 2000, Glick Schiller et al. 1995, Hamilton and Stoltz Chinchilla 1991, and Herzog 1992, Lopez et al. 1996, Mahler 1998, Popkin 1999, Portes 1995, 1999, Portes and Zhou 1993 and Portes et al. 1999).

To address the multiplicity, ambiguity and ambivalence of those meanings and practices about socio-racial hierarchy and the place of everyone in society in Guatemala, I

consider it useful to follow US Critical Race Theory approaches to social and racial formation (Allen 1994, Delgado 1995, Delgado and Stefancic 1997, Frankenberg 1991, Giroux 1997, Goldberg 1990, 1995 and Sheffer 1986), the relationship among race, colonialism and plantation economy (Hall 1980 and 1996 and Sweet 1997), the history of foreign immigration (Bonilla-Silva and Lewis 1999, Brimelow 1995, Conzen 1991, Foner 2001, Jaret 1999, and Takaki 1979) and the racialization of popular struggles, such as Black Power, Brown Power and Yellow Power (Barkan 1991). Other aspects of CRT's contributions that are relevant for my research questions are criticisms of Marxist reductionism (Bonilla-Silva 1997 and Harrison 1995) and focused approaches to racial formation at micro and macro levels (Omi and Winant 1986 and Martinot 2000), institutional racism, working-class racism and "new" cultural racism (Pavalko 1980, Santa Ana 1998, Stolcke Van Dijk 1987 and 1991), whiteness (Harting 1997, Lipsitz 1999, and Roediger 1991, 1995), international relations (De León 1983, Jahn 1997, Ross 1978, and Weber 1979, 1992) and race and anti-communism (Bonilla-Silva 2000 and Horne 1999).

In conversation with CRT dealings with the Black and white dichotomy, I position this dissertation about Guatemalan social and racial formation within the unmapped relations between racial consciousness and social mobility, the development of citizenship and the racialization of inequality after WWII (Berger 1995 and Park 1995). In Guatemala the most important authors that wrote about racial formation, cultural diversity and the relation among castes, Ladinos and Indians during the colonial era, were Cortés y Larraz, Matías de Córdova, Antonio de Larrazabal, José Cecilio del Valle and Pedro Molina. Later, the liberal reforms advanced by Mariano Gálvez, the political leadership of Rafael Carrera, the indigenista program of José María Reina Barrios inspired Ignacio Solís and Antonio Batres Jauregui's approaches to liberalism and public policies addressed to

indigenous people. During the twentieth century, special attention needs to be devoted to the writings about the national construction of Guatemala by Fernando Juárez, Miguel Angel Asturias, Carlos Antonio Girón Cerna, Antonio Goubaud Carrera, Joaquin Noval, Carlos Guzmán Bockler and Severo Martinez Pelaez.

In my approach to race, mestizaje, *igualamiento*, indigenismo, *clase medierización* and nation-building in Guatemala, I follow Roger Bartra's arguments about the institutional development of national culture and the politics of post-national identity in Mexico (Bartra 1987). As a post-national survivor of the war against communism in Central America, I agree with Bartra's statement that claims discussions on nationalism should be centered around a post-national identity, which denounces the lack of democracy and minimizes the disagreement between *malinchismo* and nationalism. In Mexico, the institutional development of national culture, was built on the spiritual and material patrimony identified as the pre-Hispanic tradition, xenophobia, guadalupanismo, the symbolic space of the *cosmic race* and the "national soul" invented by Jose Vasconcelos, anti-Imperialism, muralismo, anti-Chinese sentiment, the Zapatista revolution, Lazaro Cardenas's nationalism, *indigenismo*, the official recognition of Afro-Mexico, and even whiteness (Aguirre 1957, Bonfil 1981, Tenorio 1996, Trabluse 1996 and Villoro 1979).

In Guatemala, there was no institutional development of a national culture. Instead, the prevalence of racism at all levels of the Ladino and non-indigenous society precluded the possibility of economic or political pacts (Casaus 1992, 1998, 1999). This dissertation assumes Casaus's observations about the failed history of economic and political pacts, Bartra's criticism of nation and nationalism, and the role that racial ideologies play in processes of national-building.

My interest in the role that racial ideologies play in Guatemala's processes of *civilization* and *development* began when I entered the Escuela de Historia at the Universidad de San Carlos in 1978<sup>1</sup>. I left Guatemala in 1980, and while in Mexico, I read the publications of Guatemala's guerrilla's organizations, particularly those of the Organización del Pueblo en Armas (ORPA)<sup>2</sup>. Given the high revolutionary expectations of the guerrilla movement, I thought that perhaps, given how crucial issue racism is for political organization from below, I would find in their publications, concrete explanations about the nature of racism in Guatemala and ways to dismantle it. I was looking for an approach that would combine a careful investigation, like that of Severo Martínez Peláez in *La Patria del Criollo* (1971) or the examples that Carlos Guzmán Bockler and Jean Loup Herbert presented in *Guatemala, una interpretación historico-social* (1970)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Sin temor a exagerar, considero que entre fines de los años setenta y principios de la década de los ochenta del siglo veinte, esta escuela fue el espacio más importante para el desarrollo de las ciencias sociales en Guatemala. En esas aulas convergieron historiadores, antropólogos, arqueólogos, politólogos, sociólogos, economistas, abogados y otros especialistas nacionales y extranjeros que con su experiencia generaron una efervescencia intelectual, que en los años posteriores fue brutalmente interrumpida por los programas contrainsurgentes de los gobiernos militares. Severo Martínez Peláez, Carlos Guzmán Bockler, Arturo Taracena Arriola, Jesús García Añoberos, Julio Pinto Soria, Gustavo Palma, Jean Pierre Laporte, Edgar Ruano Najarro, Luis Pedro Taracena, Julio Castellanos Cambranes, Rita Grignon, Juan Antonio Valdez, Zoila Rodríguez, Marion Hatch, Robert Carmack, Azzo Ghidinelli, Rolando Medina, Luis de Lion, Carlos Fanjul, Patricia Ardón, Ana Cofiño, Carmen Valenzuela de Garay, Otoniel Martínez, Concepción Sáenz, Mario Tejada Bouscayrol, Alfonso Arrivillaga, José Alejos, Claudia Dary, Elsa Chang, Silvia Castillo Barrios, Carlos Táran, Tito Haussler, Oscar Peláez, Carlos René Escobar, Julia González, Antonio Vásquez Bianchi, Norma Carrillo, Lorena Carrillo, Patricia Fortuny, Xóchitl Castañeda, Eric Ponciano, Carlos Figueroa Ibarra, Rene Poitevin, Gabriel Aguilera, Mario Roberto Morales, Paul Sweezy, Mario Dary, Jorge Solares, Jorge Mario Martínez, Ana Beatriz Mendizábal, Walda Barrios, Julio Galicia, Edelberto Cifuentes, Olga Pérez, Luis Raúl Salvadó, Celso Lara, Edgar Pappe Yalibat, Jorge Villar, Guillermo Pedroni, Edmundo Urrutia, Carlos Navarrete, Otto Schumann y Mario H. Ruz; entre otros estudiosos nacionales y extranjeros, compartieron durante ese breve tiempo, un amplio espectro de preocupaciones académicas, políticas y humanistas para las cuales aun no existe el espacio apropiado en la nueva etapa de post-guerra.

<sup>2</sup> Por ejemplo los materiales titulados *Racismo I y II*, abordan los aspectos económicos y sociales del racismo pero en un lenguaje doctrinario que si bien constituyó un esfuerzo de sistematización teórica, no incluyó evidencias particulares de la especificidad del racismo en Guatemala.

<sup>3</sup> Me refiero en particular a los ejemplos sobre el racismo que aparecen en el capítulo VII firmado por Herbert y titulado "Expresiones ideológicas de la lucha de clases de la discriminación racial institucional a su mixtificación: El indigenismo" (Guzmán Bockler y Herbert 1970:122-164). Según Carlos Figueroa Ibarra: *Guatemala, una interpretación histórico-social*, "... partía de un sustrato teórico-metodológico legado por varios autores que en determinado momento estuvieron inscritos en la teoría de la dependencia tales como Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Enzo Faletto, F. H. Cardoso, Pablo González Casanova y de otros autores como Balandier, Memmi, Kenyatta y Fanon. Haciendo una apretada síntesis del libro, puede decirse que los autores de la interpretación histórico-social partían de la base de que la sociedad guatemalteca era una sociedad bicolonial en tanto que en su conjunto estaba sometida al colonialismo externo (particularmente con respecto a los Estados Unidos de América) y en su interior, las relaciones de explotación estaban marcadas por lo que Stavenhagen



I read both essays in high school and Martínez Peláez came to our class to give us a conference about the contents of his book. Later at the University, I saw how those two works became a central reference in the political canon of the Guatemalan Left. Each one in itself reflected a partial picture of the intellectual environment surrounding the internal war during a period when new guerrilla's organizations were in the process of going public<sup>4</sup>. Guzmán Bockler criticized the Left's dogmatism and intellectual colonialism that stigmatized indigenous people as "la reserva estratégica de la reacción"<sup>5</sup> and his

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en las *Siete tesis equivocadas sobre América Latina* y González Casanova en *Sociología de la explotación*, denominaron "colonialismo interno". Dichas relaciones de explotación generaban a las dos clases fundamentales, la de los ladinos y la de los "indígenas" (el entrecomillado es de los autores quienes consideraban de esta forma de referirse al indio, una muestra más de colonialismo), en la que los ladinos concentraban los medios de producción y distribución y el poder del Estado y hasta tenían una ideología de dominación que era el indigenismo". Figueroa (op. cit.:28). Otros autores fueron más lejos que Figueroa. Noval escribió poco antes de su muerte en febrero de 1976: "Repito que el trabajo del grupo (de Herbert y Guzmán Bockler) no me parece científicamente evaluable". En un artículo con motivo de la interpretación histórico-social, Edelberto Torres Rivas, afirmó: "Los méritos de subrayar la situación de colonialismo interno se pierden rápidamente a medida que se asimila ad absurdum la categoría ideal de colonizador con la dudosa de ladino y se olvida la categoría sociológica de "clase dominante" en general y burguesía agrario-exportadora, en particular. En la lógica de la argumentación se confunden situaciones distintas como punto de partida, y así, se sacrifica la "estructura de clase" por la "estructura colonial" y se erige ésta en el eje total del análisis". (...) Además se "establece que: 1. La relación existente entre el ladino-indígena constituye una relación de clase. 2. La relación ladino-indígena constituye la contradicción dominante en la estructura de clases de la sociedad guatemalteca. 3. La clase ladina (?) está estratificada internamente (...) 4. La clase indígena (?) está escindida en capas; hay un proceso acelerado de proletarianización-enriquecimiento interno, pero ambos fenómenos no interesan pues el hecho fundamental y decisivo es la explotación ladina, y 5. La contradicción ladino-indígena corresponde a una dialéctica entre lo autóctono y lo extranjero (?) que no se resuelve por ladinización o integración sino por el triunfo del ser autóctono que le permitirá recuperar su tierra y su historia. He aquí -dice Torres Rivas- en poco más de mil palabras una apretada síntesis de atropellos a la lógica del razonamiento manifiesto e implícito en el resto del texto; de ignorancia de la realidad social guatemalteca y de errores teóricos, tanto si se juzga el análisis en base a la interpretación marxista de las clases sociales como a la teoría funcional estructuralista de la estratificación social. En suma: inconsecuencia para consigo mismo, desprecio por la realidad, ausencia de teoría". Torres (1973: 53-54)

<sup>4</sup> El Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP) surgió en 1972 y ORPA en 1979 con un énfasis en la cuestión indígena que los separó ideológicamente de las facciones del Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo y de una línea marxista más ortodoxa llevada por las Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR)

<sup>5</sup> Dice Luis Cardoza y Aragón: "La idea de que el indígena constituye una reserva estratégica de la reacción" (sic) por ser una masa manipulable por los terratenientes, decidió la posición reaccionaria del partido (comunista), en la que jugó un papel importante Joaquín Noval, antropólogo divulgador de las tesis de Richard N. Adams, sobre la necesidad de la "ladinización" de la sociedad de guatemalteca como medio de desarrollo social" (Cardoza 1986:738) Debe mencionarse por otro lado, que la formación académica de Noval debe buscarse en su estrecho vínculo de trabajo con Adams y en su experiencia de campo como Jefe de Investigaciones Técnicas y luego director del Instituto Indigenista de Guatemala. Noval vino a llenar parcialmente el espacio dejado por Goubaud Carrera. En mayor medida que su coetáneo, Juan de Dios Rosales, el "indio" de San Pedro la Laguna, del que hablan Redfield y Tax y que luego se convirtió en antropólogo y director del IIN en 1954, Noval asimiló el integracionismo adamsista y le añadió matices propios ligados a su preocupación por ubicar la problemática indigenista en el marco de desigualdad e injusticia social que lo llevaron a buscar su incorporación al Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (PGT) (comunista). Luego de dejar el IIN en 1954, Noval intentó recuperar la tradición etnográfica, sociológica y civilizatoria y combinarla con el enfoque marxista, reconociendo la peculiaridad de los factores étnicos e insistiendo en la postura metodológica de ver en la sociedad guatemalteca un enfrentamiento entre clases y no un conflicto entre indios y ladinos. Afirma Cardoza que "por una parte, con visión dogmática del papel de la clase obrera, el partido negaba la existencia de la cuestión indígena limitándose a hablar de campesinado; por otra parte, ante lo incuestionable de la existencia de una sociedad escindida veía en la ladinización el factor de uniformización del campesinado y la "solución" a la dificultad que entrañaba un trabajo político dentro de las

formulations strongly influenced the ideological frameworks of different sectors of the Maya intelligentsia in the following years<sup>6</sup>. His book continues attracting readers from different ideological tendencies and has been republished by Mayan publishers in recent times.

During the mid-1980s, while I was studying at the National School of Anthropology and History in Mexico City, Professor Carlos Navarrete exhorted us in a mocking attitude to accept that even forty editions of *La Patria del Criollo* would not be enough for the

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comunidades indígenas. Basado en estas tesis no realizaron labor específica alguna entre la inmensa masa indígena. Es más luego que organizaciones político-militares como la ORPA y el EGP, en primer término, y luego las FAR, basaron su desarrollo a comienzos de los setenta en un trabajo de acercamiento y politización de las comunidades indígenas, en el seno del partido no hubo siquiera una, reflexión seria sobre tal tema. No es sino a partir de la escisión de 1978 encabezada por Mario Sánchez que surge en el interior del Partido Comunista una reflexión sobre la "cuestión indígena". Por otro lado, dice Figueroa Ibarra (1984:21) que a casi treinta años de fundado "el partido": "... es curioso que el PGT nunca haya podido incorporar plenamente a su concepción teórica, las preocupaciones de Noval con respecto a las diferenciaciones culturales que él observaba en el país. El hecho cierto es que la concepción del PGT con respecto a la cuestión étnica, la cual fuera aprobada en su IV Congreso de 1969, es interesante en la parte relativa al planteamiento del problema y a la forma en que se debe concebir al indio guatemalteco, pero sumamente pobre en el marco de las reivindicaciones que un partido revolucionario debe enarbolar en una sociedad en la cual, poco más de la mitad de la población forma parte de una de las 22 etnias indígenas que existen en el país. (PGT, *El camino de la revolución guatemalteca*, Ediciones de Cultura Popular, México, 1972 y Programa de la Revolución Popular, 1970). En el fondo, afirma Figueroa, lo que sucedió fue que el PGT siempre subestimó la importancia de las diferencias culturales sobre la base de que la diferenciación en clases sociales y la lucha que le era consustancial eran lo determinante en el proceso político que vivía el país. Fue precisamente este vacío el que llenaron con su práctica esclarecedora, las organizaciones revolucionarias, como el Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres y la Organización del Pueblo en Armas, que involucraron a grandes masas de campesinos indígenas a la vida política nacional". En otra parte, Figueroa dice que "una crítica que podría hacerse a Noval es que nunca pudo sintetizar y elevar con ello a un nivel superior, sus orígenes teórico-metodológicos, con el aporte del marxismo, aun cuando hizo serios intentos como lo demuestra su magnífico trabajo de crítica a los aportes hechos por Herbert y Guzmán Bockler ("La visión de una estructura". *Revista Económica* n. 34, IIES-USAC, 1972) y en algún otro que sobre la violencia estatal también publicó". (1984:20) Al respecto de esta discusión, Arturo Arias dice que: "A partir de los años sesenta, especialmente, se ha realizado una crítica cada vez más aguda de las posiciones básicas del adamscismo que habían permanecido virtualmente intocables y eran aceptadas de buen grado por los sectores más progresistas del país (1979:179). Según Arias, "irónicamente fueron las influencias de la Revolución Mexicana así como el nacionalismo generado durante el período 1944-1954, los elementos que en mayor grado facilitaron la adopción de las tesis adamscistas, puesto que sus instrumentos de análisis servían bien a los proyectos ideológicos de la época. Es ya a partir de otro momento histórico, cuando habría de proceder a su desmitificación". Arias destaca como el adamscismo supone que el indio, está fuera del orden social por el hecho mismo de ser indio, generando así la necesidad de su "integración".

<sup>6</sup>En su aproximación crítica al "sistema colonial", en *Guatemala, una interpretación...* se habla de "un mundo basado en la explotación de la tierra en beneficio de una minoría" (Guzmán Bockler 1970:49); se dice que los términos ladino e indio son fetiches y uno y otro son resultado de procesos de *alienación*. El ladino sin embargo, es "un ser ficticio" que tiene "tendencia a definirse por lo que no es", "antepone el creer al razonar" y "como no tiene certeza de su ser propio, se entrega a lo foráneo" (Ibid.:104). De su posición de "intermediario" entre el colonizado y el colonizador, "parece surgir un alma de lacayo que no es sino el reflejo de la carencia de identidad; al no encontrarse a sí mismo, el ladino se entrega a lo extranjero, sin que esto tenga que ver mayormente con los credo políticos o religiosos. Mas bien, los dictados religiosos y políticos de las élites ladinas son regularmente tomados de fuera: En el intento de poner en marcha el *American way of life*, o bien, en la tentativa de adecuar mecánicamente la teoría de la lucha de clases (para citar dos ejemplos), el ladino esquivo el planteamiento correcto de su propia posición frente al indio y frente al extranjero; ambos aparatos conceptuales le han servido para soslayar su papel de eje de la doble explotación colonial: interna y externa". (Ibid.:110). El volumen critica el "colonialismo mental y vasallaje intelectual" de los ladinos de la *pequeña burguesía de izquierda* que les hace adoptar el marxismo y las tesis de la antropología norteamericana sobre la latinización y la conversión de los indígenas en mestizos de *capa media emergente*." (Ibid:187)

construction of a new democratic State in Guatemala<sup>7</sup>. Navarrete claimed for more historical and anthropological research directed to bolster radical politics as that created by Martinez Pelaez and Guzman Bockler and Herbert. Twenty years later, Carol A. Smith (2004) in a more critical vein, lamented that at the Universidad de San Carlos there are still people that read *La Patria del Criollo*, in which Martinez argues that the Indian self is a colonial product that needs to be suppressed by socialist revolution<sup>8</sup>.

From 1982 to 1987, I was working as a political analyst for the Agencia Centroamericana de Noticias, (ENFOPRENSA) and from that position, I observed how the guerrilla commanders defended the historical pertinence of socialism, but never suggested specific strategies to eliminate a problem like racism in Guatemala or the authoritarianism that pervaded their own *revolutionary* apparatus. Guerillas organizations did not assume

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<sup>7</sup> Figueroa Ibarra afirma que “Noval tuvo relativo éxito en rebatir las tesis de Herbert y Guzmán Bockler y Severo Martínez Peláez con *La Patria de Criollo* se encargó de barrerlas al comprobar, mediante la investigación histórica que el indio es un producto histórico, reconocible a partir de la colonia y no la entidad transhistórica que Herbert y Guzmán plantean”. “Hoy puede decirse -afirma Figueroa- que no existe organización revolucionaria que pueda ignorar el aporte de *La Patria del Criollo* ya sea para utilizarlo como elemento de interpretación o en referencia crítica”. (...) La cuestión étnica, en la parte referida a la explicación histórica del indio, puede considerarse uno de los aportes fundamentales del libro, el cual se convirtió en la respuesta más contundente a la “interpretación histórico social”, aún cuando su elaboración poco tuvo que ver con la polémica que el libro de Herbert y Guzmán Bockler desencadenó” (...) “Como un resultado de todo lo anterior el autor (Martínez Peláez) llegó a la conclusión de que el indio guatemalteco no es otra realidad que un producto colonial, una cultura nacida en el contexto de la opresión, que no es la misma que se observó en la época precolombina, pero tampoco una asimilación mecánica del legado español. Se trataría de una realidad, un producto colonial que sobrevive hasta el presente. En el momento actual, el indio guatemalteco ya no puede identificarse con una clase social en particular como en términos sustanciales se pudo hacer en la colonia la identificación indio-siervo colonial, de tal manera que lo correcto es hablar del indio como una manifestación cultural heredada de la colonia que se expande por todas las clases sociales que conformaban a la sociedad guatemalteca” Figueroa (op. cit.: 29). En torno a la polémica sobre la cuestión étnica y la lucha de clases con base en las posturas de Martínez Peláez y Guzmán Bockler y Herbert pueden verse también Solares (1976) y Martínez (1977).

<sup>8</sup> Según Martínez Peláez: “Un número creciente de guatemaltecos intuye, sin equivocarse, que nuestra afirmación como pueblo exige que aprendamos a renegar de nuestro pasado en tanto que es un pasado colonial; o lo que es lo mismo: la necesidad de reconocernos y afirmarnos más bien en nuestras posibilidades latentes proyectadas hacia el porvenir” (1971:12). Martínez Peláez defiende la pertinencia de utilizar términos como explotación y clases sociales y desde una visión positivista y universalizante afirma que “la inferioridad general permanente” de los indígenas en la época colonial fue resultado de la superioridad “tecnológica” y “cultural” de los españoles en particular del uso de caballos, el acero y la pólvora. (Ibid.: 34-35) Aunque en buena medida su ensayo está basado no en la visión bipolar de las dos Repúblicas sino de las dos Españas, la del peninsular y la del criollo, me parece que son útiles sus explicaciones sobre la historia agraria, la independencia como implantación de la patria de los criollos, la pregunta sobre si los mestizos pueden ser considerados parte de las capas medias, los prejuicios coloniales en torno a la holgazanería, la embriaguez y la frugalidad atribuida a los indios y sus observaciones en torno al rechazo explícito de los colonos a establecer la libre contratación del trabajo asalariado en lugar del trabajo forzado del repartimiento. Esta resistencia a establecer relaciones salariales y mantener en su lugar la compulsión forzada al trabajo afectaría en los siglos siguientes y hasta el presente, el desarrollo político del Estado y el crecimiento del mercado interno. Sin embargo, en la actualidad sigue existiendo enorme resistencia a vincular el estudio de las relaciones interétnicas en Guatemala a la historia inconclusa de las relaciones entre salario y trabajo desde la matriz colonial hasta el presente.

the political endeavor recommended by Navarrete, and did not incorporate into their internal discussions, concepts, such as *political war*, *hegemony* or *moral leadership*, which were part of international debate during the 1980s. Their priority was to concentrate all the collective effort into military action. That strategy required political participation based on faith and obedience, and rarely on knowledge and information. In retrospect, I can say that during the 1980s the only novelty were the discussions about the *cuestion etnica* and the autonomy, contributed by Hector Diaz Polanco (1985) and his associates linked to the *Sandinista* revolution in Nicaragua, and clearly oriented to the construction of a national popular subject, subtracted from the relevance of non-class inequalities. Those discussions would reappear again years later after the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, in 1994.

In 1987, I left Mexico City and went to Chiapas, moved by the interest of taking some distance from the orthodoxy of some of my Guatemalan comrades and wanting to learn more about the history of Mesoamerica's culture and, society. I began to work as researcher for the Chiapas Institute of Culture and professor at the Autonomous University of Chiapas. There, I observe in daily life a wide scope of manifestations of racism and relations of servitude that reminded me of those practiced in Guatemala and that were underestimated by the guerrilla commanders<sup>9</sup>. As part of my work in Chiapas, from 1987 to 1995, I went frequently to the Mexico-Guatemala border, to document the experiences of indigenous and mestizo settlers in the ejidos from Marques de Comillas in the Chiapas'

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<sup>9</sup> Trabajaba en la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas (UNACH) en San Cristóbal de Las Casas cuando se dio el alzamiento zapatista del 1 de enero de 1994. A los pocos días cuando el *miedo a la rebelión de los indios* estaba en uno de sus puntos mas altos en San Cristóbal de Las Casas, apareció un graffiti en el sanitario de hombres de la Facultad, que decía: "Mueran los putos indios chamulas porque se cogieron a mi mamá y fue cuando yo nací pero yo me cogí a tu madre y me convertí en tu padrastro". Aunque la aparición de graffittis políticos en los sanitarios no ha sido exclusiva de la UNACH sino que pueden verse en restaurantes y otros lugares públicos, este graffiti en particular me parece que ilustra los atributos del poder patriarcal, característico de la jerarquía simbólica favorable al mestizo ladino. Es destacable en esta expresión anónima de la ansiedad mestiza, la muerte y la feminización del enemigo simbólico, el vengar la violación de la madre de uno con la violación de la madre del otro y de paso bastardizar al que en realidad es el padre biológico de uno.

Lacandonian Jungle and the villages situated at the adjacent territories of El Peten and Ixcán Playa Grande in Guatemala. That research gave me the possibility to see the role intra-national and international migration play in the constitution of socio-racial hierarchies and symbolic wars beyond national borders. In Chiapas, I found many empirical references about the contradictions of race, class and gender relations, and with that information, I began to organize an analytical framework to criticize the stereotypical perception of Chiapas and Guatemala as places of symbolic confrontation between Indians and Ladinos in which racism is reduced to the presence of anti-Indian sentiment.

After finishing my M.A. at Stanford University on 1998, I moved to Guatemala for eight months to work at the project *Mestizaje en Centro America*, headed by Professors Charles R. Hale, Jeffrey Gould and Dario Euraque, in which I advanced a critique of the Indian-Ladino dichotomy and developed a preliminary approach to the impact of whiteness in reinforcing anti-Indian and anti-mestizo sentiments<sup>10</sup>. Between 2001 and 2003, I had the opportunity to discuss perspectives and findings on the complexity of racial and class prejudices in modern Guatemala, thanks to my participation in the projects *Relaciones Interétnicas en Guatemala*, coordinated by Drs. Arturo Taracena Arriola, Santiago Bastos and Richard N. Adams<sup>11</sup> and *Juventud e Identidad en Centro América*, directed by Dr. Dina Kraupskof<sup>12</sup>.

This dissertation is based on research carried out in libraries and archival holdings located in México City, San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Guatemala City, Stanford,

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<sup>10</sup> Ver informe "La visible invisibilidad de la blancura y el ladino como no blanco en Guatemala". 2000. Proyecto *Mestizaje en Centro América*. Charles R. Hale, Dario Euraque y Jeffrey Gould, (coords.) Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica y Universidades de Texas, Indiana y Wisconsin.

<sup>11</sup> Ver informe "Ladinos en el Valle de los Muertos". 2001. Proyecto *Relaciones interétnicas en Guatemala*. Richard N. Adams, Santiago Bastos y Arturo Taracena Arriola (coords.) Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica. Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala.

<sup>12</sup> Ver informe "Perspectivas y expectativas de los jóvenes guatemaltecos sobre el racismo, el autoritarismo e interculturalidad". 2003. Proyecto *Juventud e identidad en Centro América*. Dina Kraupskof (coord.) Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica, Fundación Rockefeller.

California, Cambridge, Massachusetts and Austin, Texas; and on fieldwork conducted from January to August 1998 and from April 2001 to August 2003. I combined informal conversations, in-depth interviews, unstructured interviews, , participatory observation, attendance of public events and socializing spaces like schools, restaurants, discotheques, parks, markets, churches, public transportation and political rallies. Through these means, I obtained the information that supports my analysis of race, culture and regressive modernization and the convergence of prejudices and stereotypes more characteristic of a socio-racial hierarchy, than an ethnic dichotomy. I sustain that modernization in Guatemala has been regressive because incorporated indigenous and mestizo populations into the national economy as cheap labor, while excluded them from the benefits of citizenship and liberal democracy. The local Liberals predicated the *creation of wants and needs* as a civilizing factor but in practice the State delayed the modernization of the relationships between capital and labor and justified authoritarianism, segregation and selective assimilation. It is from this modernization process, its failures for some, and successes for others, that we need to depart, and not from the encapsulation of society into the synchronic and atemporal space of the Indian-Ladino dichotomy.

In Guatemala, the self-identified Ladinos have denied their mestizo condition and adopted prejudices and stereotypes that denigrate all non-whites around the world. Benedict Anderson's observation about the unifying and legitimizing role print capitalism plays in building a national community (1983) operated in the Guatemalan case in the opposite way. Newspapers and novels explicitly justified segregation and selective assimilation, naturalizing dictatorship and relations of servitude. Whites, Creoles and Ladinos rejected *mestizaje indigena* as a fundamental reference for the construction of *mestizaje* as an official ideology that could support the institutional development of a

national culture, as in the Mexican case. The ruling class promoted a *de facto* segregation of Indians from non-Indians<sup>13</sup>, and the conviction that everyone occupies the place that he/she deserves in the local and the global socio-racial hierarchy. Assimilation took place mostly through the whitening of Ladinos, a factor that facilitated their self-representation as non-indigenous whites and consequently the denial of their indigenous legacy. However, that position did not exclude the stigmatization of Ladinos by the Creole and white elite as *chances aguacateros, cachimbiros, igualados, lamidos, shumos, mucos* or *choleros*.

From colonial until present times there has been a denigration of Indians, Ladinos, Blacks, Asians and Mestizos that has been mostly internalized by Ladinos. There is also an inferiorization of Ladinos by local whites and white foreigners and in current times the repudiation of Ladinos and whites by Mayas, which is interpreted as "racismo al revés", according to the "critique" of that "racism" formulated by Charles R. Hale (1999). In Guatemala, racist and class prejudices from the elite have blocked the development of citizenship and social mobility. But, though most of the racist attitudes in Guatemala reflect the virulence of the anti-Indian sentiment. However, it is impossible to understand its origins and expansion if that sentiment is not linked with other forms of class and cultural denigration and inferiorization.

In this dissertation, I analyze the colonial construction of indigenous individuals as "pure Indians" or docile and hardworking servants, and mestizo castes or *indios aladinados* as lazy vagrants and rebellious characters and how this colonial legacy has unfolded and played out up to the present. Both constructions still justify coerced labor and the criminalization of dark plebeians. I examine the ideologies of acculturation of "pure

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<sup>13</sup> Magnus Morner. "La política de segregación y el mestizaje en la Audiencia de Guatemala", en *Revista de Indias*, Nos. 95-96, Madrid, 1964; Christopher Lutz. *Historia sociodemográfica de Santiago de Guatemala, 1541-1773*, CIRMA, Guatemala, 1982; *Santiago de Guatemala, 1541-1773. City, Caste and the Colonial Experience*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1994.

Indians” and the attempts of Pan-American indigenismo aimed at transforming indigenous and Afro-descendants into middle-class Mestizos, receptive to the values of liberal democracy and anti-communism. In that respect, I approach the process of *clase mediarización* in Guatemala after WWII as a factor that stimulated the *respeto al canche* and the *verguenza por el mestizaje indigena*. *Respeto al canche* and *verguenza por el mestizaje indigena* are figures that allude to the hegemonic influence of the values of whiteness in Guatemalan society, and from that perspective, I address the discursive presence of the criticism of *igualamiento*, and the symbolic wars between *gente decente* and *gente corriente*, which are invisible through the Indian-Ladino dichotomy. In contrast with that dichotomy which very often presents Ladinos as whites, I explore the Ladinos’ cultural and racial definition as non-whites, particularly through their symbolic depiction as *hijos de la gran puta*.

I argue that the tutelary defense of indigenous people against Ladino society advanced by many foreign and some Guatemalan anthropologists, encapsulates the indigenous self in a closed universe, favoring the cultural consumption of *indios puros*, and *Mayas arqueológicos*, and the repudiation of Ladinos populares and *indios aladinados*. The post-industrial defense of the Maya self reduces the indigenous movement to cultural activism and ignores the connections of the anti-Indian sentiment to colonial representations of global racism that inferiorize non-whites around the world. This encapsulation of the indigenous self contributes to the reproduction of tutelary relations, the commodification of cultural difference and the State’s strategy of governance constructed by multicultural neoliberalism (Hale 2002). That encapsulation of Mayas misses the point that Ladinoization has operated from colonial until present times, not only as cultural loss



but also as a form of cultural resistance within the framework of cultural modernity and capitalist modernization.

The demonization of Ladinos and the rigidity of the Indian-Ladino dichotomy buttress the epistemic superiority of anthropologists and their power to define who is Maya, Ladino, Garifuna or Xinka. For example, in the anthropologists' ethnographies, Ladino culture is usually conceptualized as a non-exotic extension of Western and urban industrialized culture. Ladinos are very often represented as power holders that defend Christian, modern, pro-capitalist and non-indigenous values and very rarely they mention the cultural resistance of indigenous people and popular Ladinos to the presence of a small but very powerful minority that represents itself as white and is very active in producing representations that racialize inequality and naturalize authoritarianism<sup>14</sup>. That minority participates from the racist repudiation of Ladinos and *indios aladinados* but the anthropologists' Ladinophobia is different in the way de-historicizes the role of Ladinos from different social classes in particular periods of Guatemalan history.

Sixty years ago, Robert Redfield diminished the importance of a historical perspective and did not notice anti-Indian and anti-Ladino racism in Guatemala, like many anthropologists who were busy describing the *cultural change* directed to convert Indians into citizens and consumers. They took for granted that *development* and the *clase mediarización del mundo* would be the best solution for structural inequality.<sup>15</sup> In the

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<sup>14</sup> Marta Elena Casaús Arzú ha sido en ese sentido pionera en darle visibilidad a la invisible presencia de ese sector de la sociedad guatemalteca. Ver por ejemplo, "Los proyectos de integración social del indio y el imaginario nacional de las élites intelectuales guatemaltecas, siglos XIX y XX", en *Revista de Indias*, Vol. LIX, No. 217, 1999, pp. 775-813; *La metamorfosis del racismo en Guatemala*, Cholsamaj, Guatemala:, 1998; y *Guatemala, linaje y racismo*, FLACSO, Guatemala, 1992.

<sup>15</sup> Las posturas de la antropología aplicada de los Estados Unidos en torno a la conversión de los indígenas en mestizos de clase media y su protagonismo modernizante, puede verse por ejemplo en el caso de Mario Monteforte Toledo que escribió: "El complejo mestizo-clase media ha provocado e impulsado todos los cambios progresistas, él es el que forma y consolida la conciencia de la nacionalidad ...es la ideología del mestizo así evolucionado y estabilizado dentro de la

anthropologists' view, racism was not an obstacle for *community development* programs that were seen as the most effective way to convert Guatemala into the anti-communist showcase promised by the US government after 1954. That *development* would pull out Guatemala from its condition of a *pre-national country* (Silvert 1956, 1975).

In 1945, Redfield<sup>16</sup> gave a lecture in Guatemala City in which he insisted that “the Guatemalan problem” was not only rural, but Indian, and, as in many places around the world<sup>17</sup>, that “problem” would be solved through economic modernization and by education<sup>18</sup>. Redfield, an active promoter of the Pan-American indigenismo from

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sociedad la que está adquiriendo constantemente el sector indio a través de la aculturación” (Guzmán Bockler y Herbert 1970:140)

<sup>16</sup> Redfield estudió abogacía y luego se incorporó a la antropología. De 1930 a 1946 fue jefe de la misión de investigación que trabajó en Yucatán y Guatemala, bajo los auspicios de la Institución Carnegie, las universidades de Duke y Chicago, en la cual también participaron Alfonso Villa Rojas y Sol Tax. Fue representante del Consejo Nacional de Investigación de los Estados Unidos ante el Consejo Directivo del Instituto Indigenista de ese país. Desde esa posición y en su carácter de profesor y presidente del Departamento de antropología y decano de la División de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad de Chicago, influyó en la fundación de institutos indigenistas en Centroamérica y en la formación de antropólogos, particularmente en Guatemala, de donde surgió Antonio Goubaud Carrera, quien luego de ser becario de Chicago se convirtió en director del primer Instituto Indigenista de ese país. Se le otorgaron las más altas distinciones académicas conocidas en los Estados Unidos entre las que cuentan la medalla Viking, la Huxley Memorial Medal y el premio Robert Maynard Hutchins de la Universidad de Chicago. Su concepción cultural-funcionalista influyó notoriamente en estudiantes mexicanos y guatemaltecos con quienes estuvo en contacto y que luego principalmente en el caso mexicano, formaron una generación de científicos reconocidos en su país. Murió el 16 de octubre de 1958.

<sup>17</sup> Esta conferencia muy poco conocida y comentada en el mundo académico de lengua inglesa se publicó en México y en Guatemala con el título “Los grupos étnicos y la formación de la nacionalidad”, en *Boletín Indigenista*, Vol. V, No. 3, septiembre de 1945. Ver también Robert A. Rubinstein. *Fieldwork: The Correspondence of Robert Redfield & Sol Tax*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1991.

<sup>18</sup> Solomon Tax por su lado, había escrito años antes (1939), que el indigenista tiene dos finalidades en cierto grado incompatibles: “mantener y fomentar la cultura indígena, y mejorar la economía salud, y educación de los indios. Sin embargo, el logro de la segunda de dichas finalidades implica la posible desaparición de la cultura indígena como tal, o a lo sumo su supervivencia como parte de la cultura ladina”. Tax realizó investigaciones entre los indígenas apaches, fox, pottawatomie y entre los quichés, cakchiqueles y tzutuhiles de Guatemala. Inició sus estudios en Guatemala a fines de 1934. Se ocupó inicialmente de estudiar la comunidad de Chichicastenango, El Quiché. Produjo un informe cuyo valor está limitado por su fracaso en el aprendizaje del idioma quiché. Entre 1934 y 1941 vivió varios meses en Panajachel, Sololá en donde elaboró, según algunos, el estudio más completo de la economía de un pueblo indígena que se hubiera escrito en Guatemala en esa época. Después de 16 meses de trabajo de campo, escribió en 1937 un estudio titulado “Los municipios del altiplano mesoccidental de Guatemala en donde propone utilizar al municipio como unidad básica de análisis para el altiplano guatemalteco. En 1942 dirigió un proyecto en los Altos de Chiapas, México, conjuntamente con Redfield y en el cual participaron los entonces estudiantes, Calixta Guiteras Holmes, Fernando Cámara y Ricardo Pozas. El grueso de su trabajo de campo en Guatemala lo realizó entre 1935 y 1941. Junto a Redfield, Goubaud Carrera y Juan de Dios Rosales, durante un tiempo su informante éste último, efectuó numerosos trabajos de etnografía exploratoria en Guatemala y un recorrido desde Chiapas hasta Veracruz, México en 1944. En 1956, dirigió un proyecto en Chiapas destinado a establecer las condiciones del cambio cultural en una porción del valle del río Grijalva, frontera con Guatemala. Ese mismo año participó en la constitución del denominado Seminario de Integración Social Guatemalteca, centro rector de la investigación aplicada en el país controlado por académicos norteamericanos. Fue un activo promotor de la denominada “Antropología de la Acción” y presidente de la Asociación Antropológica de los Estados Unidos durante el bienio 1958-1959. Recibió en 1962, la medalla Viking, al igual que Redfield.

Pátzcuaro,<sup>19</sup> warned that education and modernization had caused “la desmoralización y hasta la desaparición” of many indigenous groups in Africa, North América del Norte and the South Pacific islands. However, the situation would not be so difficult in Guatemala, he argued, because Indians were more disposed to becoming Ladinos, and moreover, because racial prejudices did not exist in Guatemala. Besides, Redfield stated, Indians were already accustomed to the use of money, free market and economic transactions based on individual responsibility<sup>20</sup>.

Redfield insisted on the benefits of directed cultural change by anthropologists trained locally who would actively participate in the *formación de la nacionalidad guatemalteca*<sup>21</sup> grounded in three basic premises: 1) Indians would need to become

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<sup>19</sup> Desde 1938, la III Conferencia Internacional Americana había resuelto que "era conveniente establecer un centro de estudios que compilara y redistribuyera la información relativa a la situación de los grupos indígenas y al proceso de su completa reintegración a los correspondientes medios nacionales" (IIN 1969:19). La Conferencia recomendó realizar el siguiente año (1939) un congreso indigenista continental en La Paz, Bolivia con ayuda de la Unión Panamericana, para discutir la creación de un Instituto Indigenista Interamericano. Este congreso no pudo realizarse sino hasta abril de 1940 en Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, México, de donde surgió la iniciativa de suscribir una Convención que ratificara los compromisos contenidos en el Acta Final y cuyos primeros firmantes fueron los gobiernos de Estados Unidos, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Perú y México. Posteriormente lo hicieron Nicaragua, Panamá, República Dominicana y Paraguay. Guatemala como veremos mas adelante se resistió a firmar aduciendo que en el país no existía “problema indígena”.

<sup>20</sup> Para ilustrar el caso, Redfield puso el ejemplo de una mujer indígena que se arrepintió de casarse y para reponer el dinero que su novio gastó durante *la pedida*, se fue a la capital a trabajar como sirvienta y así cumplió con la responsabilidad individual del pago. En una perspectiva similar acerca del individualismo y la responsabilidad personal, Tax había observado años antes: "La impresión superficial que dan estos indígenas, sin conocer por decirlo así sus pensamientos, es la de una sociedad que, en pequeña escala comparte la vida secular, impersonal, de libertad individual, en lo económico y social, que caracteriza a nuestras grandes ciudades". Dentro de la comunidad "se puede observar un cambio de negocios y de modas tan rápido, como el que ocurre entre nosotros. La gente va de un lado a otro; va a otros lugares en vía de negocios y regresa a otra población durante algunos años o para el resto de su vida" (Tax op. cit.). Tax decía:... "Redfield y yo, pronto nos dimos cuenta de que en Guatemala (1939) las sociedades en cuestión son pequeñas, sin adulteraciones y homogéneas, en lo que se refiere a las creencias y a las costumbres, movedizas, con relaciones impersonales, con instituciones formales, que dictan la conducta de sus miembros, con una organización familiar frágil, con una vida secularizada, en la cual las personas actúan más por móviles de lucro o de beneficio personal, que por otra convicción profunda o consideración de beneficio publico". (Ibid.) Reforzando esa opinión Redfield aseguró que "en realidad, los indígenas ya están acostumbrados a las instituciones de control social impersonal, instituciones que son casi iguales en su personalización como en las instituciones de la ley formal y de la policía que caracterizan a la vida de la ciudad". (...) Y hacia el final de su conferencia, concluyó: "Los pequeños grupos étnicos que forman, podríamos decir, el corazón mismo de Guatemala, se encuentran listos ya para recibir los impulsos de la civilización moderna".

<sup>21</sup> Desde el punto de vista del antropólogo, y de un antropólogo extranjero como yo, -señala Redfield- es dable decir que Guatemala puede acelerar la incorporación de los indígenas a la vida común del país" (Redfield op. cit.: 44-45) En otra parte, pronosticó: "En este país que está en el proceso de forjar una nacionalidad, que surgirá de muchos y distintos grupos étnicos, la antropología será de gran utilidad. Tiene esta ciencia ya los conocimientos de los procesos que implican el cambio o transmutación de los grupos sociales. El antropólogo puede suministrar el conocimiento especializado que se necesita para dirigir adecuadamente la transformación de los grupos étnicos y que a la vez son retrasados hacia la vida moderna (...) No hay duda que los antropólogos guatemaltecos actuales y los que se formen en el futuro, contribuirán en

Ladinos in order to exercise their citizenship rights<sup>22</sup>; 2) Education, understood as learning to read and write in Spanish, was required to exercise those rights, and 3) The individualistic character that Indians exhibited in their daily personal interactions, according with Redfield, would be of great help for the overall process. Those premises would orient the work of applied anthropology directed to promote acculturation which in distinctive contexts was considered synonymous of nationalization, mestization, Ladinoization, ciudadanization or *social integration* of Indians into capitalist market and money culture.

During the late 1970s, Douglas Brintnall (1979)<sup>23</sup> recognized the existence of Ladino racism, but did not pay attention to representations that inferiorized non-white people in Guatemala. He recalled that the almost universal ethnographic generalization is that Indians and Ladinos are not racial groups, but cultural groups differentiated by language, dress and participation in religious and civic hierarchies. According to Britnall, building on Tax, the characterization of Indians and Ladinos as cultural groups instead of races, was based in four considerations: 1) Indians and Ladinos are not always physically different; 2) Ladino do not always consider themselves superiors to Indians; 3) Their differences are cultural, and 4) The inferior position of Indians does not come from discrimination, but from the disadvantage of using their language. Tax sustained that by characterizing Indians and Ladinos as races “there is a danger of bestowing upon

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mucho a la solución de los problemas, que surgen de la evolución de la nacionalidad del país”, concluyó Redfield. (Ibid.: 45)

<sup>22</sup> Contradictoriamente, Redfield advirtió; “Al insistir en que el problema de Guatemala es el de procurar hacer entrar a los grupos étnicos del país, en una nacionalidad completa, nos encontramos con un obstáculo; el bienestar de la comunidad rural, sea indígena o no, depende de las instituciones sociales tradicionales que poseen dichas comunidades. Hay que pensar que educar es, frecuente y desgraciadamente, equivalente a desintegrar”. (Ibid.:41-42)

<sup>23</sup> Douglas Brintnall, 1979. “Race relations in the southeastern highlands of Mesoamerica”, *American Ethnologist*, v. 6, n. 4, 638-652

Guatemala a race problem that does not exist”<sup>24</sup>. The interpretation of the Indian-Ladino dichotomy as a relationship between ethnic groups, according to Tax, and not between races as Morris Siegel claimed, became the dominant posture. Britnall says that Siegel (1941) in his attempt to show the slowness of cultural change in San Miguel Acatán, referred to the Ladinos in that place as whites who believed in “white racial superiority” and considered Indians to be “an inferior species of mankind”. Toward the end of his article, Siegel observed that “if the natives would take on white ways with respect to dress, speech, etcetera, they would be practically indistinguishable physically from their masters, and consequently, would become increasingly dangerous to a white rule based, for the most part, on a racial distinction”. This line of reasoning implied that if Indians were open to taking on the customs of those who considered themselves to be whites, then white power would be threatened by the Indian masses that became white. Siegel did not explain why, except for dress, language and other factors, Indians were physically indistinguishable from Ladinos and why Ladinos considered themselves white. Neither Siegel nor Britnall explained why Ladinos were racially Indians who wanted to be recognized as whites nor did they analyze why Ladinos feel white although they are not.

Many ethnographers, such as Siegel and Britnall, never said that as symbolic camp of representation, the so-called Ladino superiority is in fact a projection of white superiority. Very rarely is it discussed that as dominant mentality, Ladino superiority naturalizes the superiority of whites over non-whites, equalizing Ladinos with whites and presenting them as the radical others of Indians. In Guatemala there is a racialization of inequality that has

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<sup>24</sup> Reforzando esta postura pueden citarse las formulaciones de Nathan L. Whetten, J. Biesanz, David Vela, Juan de Dios Rosales, Mario Monteforte Toledo, Richard N. Adams y Joaquín Noval (Guzmán Bockler 1970:126-127) que apoyan lo dicho por Redfield acerca de que en Guatemala no existe prejuicio racial sino más bien diferencias culturales. Esta indefinición o falta de visibilidad del racismo es la que por otro lado me motiva a desarrollar una aproximación que vaya mas allá del fenotipo y del *racismo biológico*.

been ignored by anthropologists committed to defending Maya culture, but oblivious to the power attached to whiteness and anti-communism, particularly after the reversion of Guatemalan revolutionary nationalism. In the Guatemalan case, whiteness and anti-communism criminalized poverty, justified racial and cultural inequality and aggrandized the importance of being “canche y de pisto”.

Although a general definition of whiteness does not explain the ideological factors at play in the construction of citizenship and the modern nation in Guatemala, we could say that as a national and global phenomena, whiteness is the power to decide the criteria that establishes that to be human is synonymous with being modern, masculine, individualist, rational, urban, literate wealthy, owner of private property, patriot, consumerist, Christian, neoliberal or anti-communist. Whiteness then, is not restricted to phenotype or to the fact of being Euro-American, Creole, white or Ladino. Rather, it expresses values assumed by a sector of the population in each national society that is part of a planetary minority who subscribes to the principles of Social Darwinism, radical individualism, the *imperial mind* and anti-communist humanism. Whiteness is not only an elitist global ideology, but what makes it relevant as a factor of power relations is its capacity to mobilize sentiments across national, social and cultural borders. Although there is *pigmentocracia* in Guatemala, whiteness goes beyond differences that distinguish “canches” from “morenos”, or the fact pointed out by Carol A. Smith (1995) that Guatemalan males prefer to find wives that have lighter skin than theirs.

Whiteness in Guatemala has more porous boundaries than the white and Black dichotomy that prevails in US critical race theory. Its invisibility is in many ways an unexplained symptom of how the racist supremacy of the mestizo middle class has helped hide the failure of the dominant classes to become leading classes. Mestizo adherence to

whiteness bolstered the “moral leadership” (Krutz 1996, Laclau and Mouffe 1985) of the dominant class as reflected in the *respeto al canche* or in the Ladino obsession to prove by any means that one’s family possesses a European ancestor, whether real or fictitious, in order to mitigate feelings of racial, cultural and social inferiority. At the international level, whiteness manifests itself in the transnational power of the elite that assumes its right to decide the fate of all of those who, due to their racial, social or cultural condition, deserve to be protected, defended or patronized. In this respect, the visible invisibility of whiteness in Guatemala cannot be explained only by the ideological strategies of the oligarchic elite or by the failure of anthropologists to recognize the racism which involves them<sup>25</sup>.

Although Carol A. Smith affirms that US anthropologists did not see racism in Guatemala due to analytical deficiencies of their theory, it seems to me that part of the reason for that failure can be related to their worldview grounded in the naturalization of capitalism, the civilizing virtues of liberal democracy and consumerism, and their own nationalism attached to the *imperial mind*, the historical logic of *American exceptionalism* and the moral superiority of anti-communism.

Anthropologists did not look at the transnational, interethnic and interclass appeal of anti-communism and its political efficacy as a tool for political war and hegemonic mobilization. After the coup d’Etat that removed Jacobo Arbenz in 1954, Guatemala did not become the showcase of capitalist development promised by the promoters of the “Liberation”. Nevertheless, anti-communism became an ideology that influenced people of

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<sup>25</sup> Dice Carol A. Smith (1999) que los antropólogos norteamericanos no se dieron cuenta de la existencia de racismo en Guatemala debido a “fallas analíticas” de la teoría y no fue sino hasta la emergencia de una nueva intelectualidad maya en combinación con el trabajo de académicas feministas que pudieron empezar a identificarse vínculos entre el parentesco y las relaciones de casta, clase, raza y etnia. A esta explicación disciplinaria sobre las razones por las que los antropólogos de los Estados Unidos no notaron la existencia de racismo en Guatemala, podría agregarse además el peso ideológico de su propia visión de la realidad basada en la naturalización del capitalismo, la creencia en las promesas de la democracia liberal, la *clasesmediarización del mundo* y la conciencia nacionalista de su superioridad social, racial y cultural legitimada por el *imperial mind* y el *American exceptionalism*.

all social strata and cultural groups<sup>26</sup>. Anti-communism created a poli-class and multicultural coalition around the models of social success and failure, articulated around money culture, private profit, egoism, radical individualism, the Hobessian man and the use of force against those who do not share the ideals of *freedom* and *democracy* around the world. As a global ideology, anti-communism, like neoliberalism today, reinforced the international prominence of whiteness (Horne 1998, 1999, Bonilla-Silva 2000). The diffusion of images and values upholding the symbolic superiority of the *American way of life* increased the importance of being middle class and the shame of being Indian, Black and Mestizo lower class. The defense of the middle class mestizo justified the suppression of Indians and Blacks, the *verguenza por el mestizaje indigena* and the prestige of anti-communist ideas about Western civilization and Christian values. The *verguenza por lo indigena* and representations about the vile nature of all non-whites contributed to Ladino self denigration, aggravating his unresolved anxieties about white supremacy and the symbolic power of whiteness. Ladinos possess an identity that is the product of affirming a negation: the explicit negation of the culture that makes them mestizos and non-white. That colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial predicament in addition to the *verguenza por el mestizaje indigena* increases the existential anguish of a national self asphyxiated by symbolic wars between *gente decente* and *gente corriente*. The relationships between those two types of people are regulated by unwritten rules that can be more or less explicit or violent. That violence shows the enormous weight of pre-modern relations of servitude and

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<sup>26</sup> Por ejemplo, el anticomunismo produjo el surgimiento en 1954 de organizaciones como el Movimiento de Liberación Nacional, (MLN) identificado por sus propios correligionarios como el *partido de la violencia organizada*. El MLN, liderado por Mario Sandoval Alarcón, alias *El Mico* y dos veces nombrado Anticomunista de América, adoptó como su padrino ideológico al Cristo Negro de Esquipulas, una imagen que goza de gran arraigo popular entre la población centroamericana y del sur de México.



the distortion of political modernity as the direct consequence of the dismantling of revolutionary nationalism.

The little research that exists on racism in Guatemala insists on demonizing Ladinos and their anti-Indian sentiment, but rarely addresses the anti-mestizo sentiment of those assumed whites and the influence of ideologies that are part of the global conservative revolution. My main argument is that in the Guatemalan case, racism cannot be reduced to the collision of ethnicities, but needs to be approached as the intermixing relationship between racial and political ideologies of whiteness and anti-communism, and the process of regressive modernization of Guatemala's State and economy. Although the presence of anti-mestizo sentiment is more accentuated among the upper classes, its current virulence could be interpreted as a reaction of the impoverished middle classes that are afraid of being labeled as part of the plebeian mass of Indians and *choleros*. The shame of being labeled *cholero*, *shumo* or *muco* is promoted by Ladinos from different social strata who firmly believe in the importance of *lineage*, *ancestry*, social and cultural capital, *clase*, *alta cultura* and *decencia*, even if the person is poor or can be stigmatized as Indian. *Choleros*, *shumos* and *mucos* have in common being indigenous, looking indigenous or having indigenous surnames. They are racist and classist classifications used to humiliate indigenous people and "ordinary" people with "dark skin". They incarnate the space of the non-white mestizo and of the *mestizaje indigena* denied by whiteness and made invisible by the Indian-Ladino dichotomy that glorifies racial purity, in particular that of the "pure white" and the "pure indian." In general terms, the deep mechanism operating in the *cholerization* or *shumization* of the bulk of society is the repudiation of indigenous people and ordinary mestizos through hegemonic representations encouraged by those whose economic and political power, authorize them to remind everyone else which place

corresponds to them in the social and racial stratification that divides Guatemala. The three derogatory terms are used to denigrate, disqualify and stigmatize everything that is of “bad taste,” poor, inferior, *vulgar* or socially undesirable. These are characteristics that in the dominant mentality have been attributed to indigenous people, particularly to *indios aladinados* or popular Ladinos who are employed as servants or work in subordinate positions. However, there is a plane of interlocution and stigmatization in which those terms intersect and people who are *caqueros* (upper class) can at the same time be *shumos*, *mucos* or *choleros*. In that context, they are the ones that “think they are a big thing” or “want to pass for something they are not.” But in most cases, the three categories are applied to people who live in settlements or neighborhoods where the crime rate is high and who are part of the masses of individuals who are disposable or criminalizable just by their appearance, their economic status or their non-exotic culture.

Paraphrasing the popular Ladino saying “*soy pobre pero no soy Indio*”, it could be said “*soy pobre o clase media empobrecido pero no soy cholero*”. A student from the Escuela de Ciencia Política from the Universidad de San Carlos says for instance that he would prefer to be treated as *hijo de la gran puta* but not to be signaled out as *cholero*. The calculated preference for one insult over the other reveals the crude overlapping of identities that are the result of relations of oppression that cannot be explained within the restricted frame of the Indian-Ladino dichotomy. The history of both, *choleros* and *hijos de la gran puta*, is part of the subjectivity produced by a socio-racial hierarchy that for several centuries has denigrated indigenous people and bastardized the mestizo majority. Very often, *choleros* are treated as *hijos de la gran puta* and vice versa, *hijos de la gran puta* share a memory of dispossession with *choleros*, which is expressed through the verbal art of “*malas palabras*”, an art rooted in Rabelaisian repertoires that unite the *ancient body* and

the *classic body* through cosmic fear and grotesqueness (Stallybrass and White 1986). From the point of view of the cultural constructs resultant from the colonial order, *hijos de la gran puta* are the popular Ladinos but also the *indios aladinados* or *ladinizados*, who symbolically have internalized the rejection of the indigenous primal mother and express their memory of dispossession through the use of insults and *malas palabras*. Their memory of dispossession uses *malas palabras* in order to reinstate the symbolic power of patriarchal figures and increases the grief or the shameful acceptance of the indigenous mother. In the racist imaginary, they are Indians even if they do not consider themselves Indians. They constitute the *chusma*, the *shumada*, the *cholera*, the rabble, the scum, the lower-class people, non-exotic non-citizens or anti-citizens, who have fallen into invisibility between the “pure Indians” and the middle and upper class whites and Ladinos.

This dissertation proposes to redirect the study of racism, mestizaje and their hegemonic representations in Guatemala through the examination of the interactions among the repertoires produced by 1) the anti-Indian racism of the upper, middle and working classes that are self-identified as non-Indians; 2) The anti-mestizo racism evident in the *respeto al canche* and in the *anti-shumo*, *anti-muco* and *anti-cholero* sentiments; and 3) the transnational, inter-class and inter-ethnic influence of whiteness and political conservatism.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I explore how the bipolar order of the *Republica de Indios* and the *Republica de Espanoles*, made mestizos invisible and created an Indian self as the docile and hardworking servant, which until present times has naturalized relations of servitude and the criminalization of poverty. In opposition to the Indian as servant, the colonial order stigmatized castes as lazy and rebellious and

minimized processes of Ladinoization from above and from below. I address the juridical construction of the figure of the vagrant and vagrancy, the symbolic displacements of the *chapin* Ladino and its transformation into the synonym of “lo Guatemalteco”; and the whitening of Ladinos in the context of Liberal Reform and export agriculture that forced them to define themselves as non-Indians. I analyze discourses of laziness and industriousness, the repudiation of *indios aladinados* and the criticism against *igualamiento* associated to the Myth of Ubico as appear in the *Semántica Guatemalteca* de Lisandro Sandoval (1941) and in the *Viajes Presidenciales* de Federico Hernández de León (1943).

In the second chapter, I examine relationships between the revolutionary nationalism of Juan José Arévalo (1945-1950) and Jacobo Arbenz (1950-1954), and the Pan-American indigenismo from the Acta de Patzcuaro (1940), the constitution of a paradigmatic Mestizo self as a successful middle class subject symbolically placed above Indians and Blacks, and the role of the US as a social actor in the processes of implementing *development* and *cultural change* directed to acculturation.

In the third chapter, I analyze the proliferation of the anti-Indian and anti-mestizo sentiments that resulted from the overlapping of the countercultural phenomena known as the *Mara* coming from the late 1950s and precede the appearance of *maras estudiantiles* on the 1970s and 1980s. These *maras estudiantiles* were overcome by the presence of *maras territoriales* during the 1990s. Other elements that strongly contributed to the expansion of the anti-Indian and anti-mestizo sentiment during the last decade were the emergence of the indigenous movement, the student protests, the intra-national migration of Indians and Ladinos due to the internal war and the economic crisis. Those sentiments constitute also, a reaction against the public presence of “new rich” that acquired material goods previously considered cultural markers of superior status, the international migration to the US, which

is modifying patterns of cultural and material consumption that favor social mobility, and the cultural impact of new technologies and the socialization of English language in popular settings. In this chapter, I analyze the taxonomy used by young students from upper, middle and working class and predominantly Ladino backgrounds that divides Guatemalan society in *mucos, shumos y choleros, fresas, caqueros y normales*, as appears in documents, such *El Shumómetro, El Cholerómetro, Algunas señas de que Sos un Loser, Mida su Cociente Shumencial, y los Cantos y Chistes Anti-Rojos*. .

In the fourth chapter, as part of my argument that Ladinos should be understood as non-whites, I describe the interactions between popular Ladinos and indigenous residents in a Guatemala City colonia, established in the early 1950s on top of the prehispanic city of Kaminal Juyu. Finally, in the last chapter, in the context of the absence of *mestizaje* as an official unifier of national identity, I explore the cultural universe of *hijos de la gran puta*, and the way they develop verbal strategies that combine *malas palabras*, grotesqueness, cosmic fear and popular religiosity about the entities of the non-visible world.

## Chapter I

### **Mestizo invisibility and the construction of Guatemalan *indigenousness and non-indigenesness***

I describe in this chapter how the legal and symbolic invisibility of mestizos within the bi-polar division of the *Republica de Españoles* and the *Republica de Indios* during colonial times in Guatemala, barely recognized the role that biological and cultural mestizaje played in the configuration of a socio-racial hierarchy based on racial and cultural “purity”. I examine the construction of ideas about legitimacy and illegitimacy, processes of Ladinoization from above and from below and the constitution of the non-indigenous culture and political attitude. I analyze how the colonial separation between *República de Indios* and *República de Españoles*, concurs with the construction of modern notions of *indigenesness* and *non-indigenesness* that subsequently were strategic for the ideological suppression of *mestizaje indigena*, and for the reproduction of tutelary relations, and the construction of Ladino superiority as white superiority. In particular, I explore how modern constructions of *indigenesness* portray “pure Indians”, as hardworking servants in contrast with non-indigenous depictions of *indios aladinados*, subordinated castas or Ladinos as lazy and disobedient individuals. This chapter explores how the dual system of *Republica de Indios* and *Republica de Españoles* invisibilized Mestizo culture and constructed an Indian self synonymous of a docile and hardworking servant that until present times still naturalizes servile relationships and criminalizes poverty. In opposition to the Indian as a servant, the colonial order stigmatized the non-Indian caste a wandering, lazy and rebellious group, reducing the importance of mestizaje and process of Ladionization from above and from below.

## The Two Republics

The colonial history of Guatemala is full of references to Indians, Spaniards, Castes, Mulattoes, Blacks, whites, Ladinos and Mestizos. Nevertheless, despite this diversity, Guatemala's colonial society was legally divided only into two different political realms: *República de Españoles* and *República de Indios*. Both *Republicas* have received attention from labor historians, but very marginal attention has been paid to conceptions of *indigenusness* and *non-indigenusness* that emerged from this bipolar division. The stereotypical idea about Guatemala as a closed universe divided into indigenous and non-indigenous people ignores the role that Creoles, Europeans, and other colonial and republican actors played in the construction of the country's cultural and capitalist modernity. According to this colonial polarity, *indigenusness* is the way of life that characterizes authentic, "pure", docile, truthful, obedient, passive, rural, agricultural and hardworking indigenous people. In contrast, *non-indigenusness* characterizes *indios aladinados*, Mestizos or Ladinos that are unauthentic, "impure", rebellious, dishonest, treacherous and lazy. In this chapter, I explore the propagation of these particular conceptions about *indigenusness* and *non-indigenusness* derived from the bipolar *Republica de Indios* and *Republica de Españoles* and its concurrence with the reproduction of a socio-racial hierarchy that sustains Guatemala's retrogressive process of capitalist modernization. As I stated earlier, retrogressive modernization in Guatemala included Indians and castes that later became Ladinos as workforce but excluded them from the benefits of cultural modernity. The civilizing process promoted the creation of wants and needs but at the same time, resisted the modernization of relationships between labor and capital. The most progressive branch of the ruling elite adopted Liberalism in theory

during colonial and republican times but in practice preferred authoritarianism and relations of servitude.

Reaching back to the first voyages of Europeans to the American continent, chroniclers produced contradictory representations of the natives' humanness and inhumanness. Particularly important to these contrasting representations, was the factual or hypothetical practice of "human sacrifices" and anthropophagia, a factor that disqualified initial assessments about the natives' ways of being as peaceful and subsequently justified their violent subjugation. As in other processes of conquest, the invader represented himself as superior to the defeated native, and produced meanings and narratives that were contested and negotiated by indigenous people in the long process of establishing colonial domination. Anthropophagia, idolatry, nakedness, promiscuity, cowardice, shyness, effeminacy, infantility, abnormal sexuality, incest, dirtiness, drunkenness, stubbornness, laziness and "lack of wants and needs", among others characteristics, were placed on the natives. Each one of those characteristics constitutes in itself a symbolic camp of representation that generated original images, repertoires, prejudices and stereotypes that are still part of the current dominant mentality in many Latin American countries, and particularly in Guatemala.

The natives' infantilization as culturally and technologically inferiors to the European colonizer supported the institution of tutelary actions directed "to protect the Indians". This guideline, in practice, implied control and optimization of the use of indigenous labor. Historical interpretations of this "protection", have paid very little attention to the parallel construction of *indigenusness* and *non-indigenusness*, and the role of these concepts in the operation of socio-racial hierarchies similar to those prevalent in the colonial world beyond the Spanish Kingdom.



The colonial regime radically redesigned spaces and created an unequal distribution of resources in favor of the European occupant. The economic needs of the colonizer were at the center of this colonial *indigenusness*, and around these needs emerged a cultural and political order with its own system of symbolic representations<sup>27</sup>. The new colonial regime produced an indigenous self, that was loyal, hardworking, obedient and receptive to Christian faith, a self that was to be protected from the nefarious influence of the lazy, drunk, pagan, rebellious and treacherous self of most rebellious Indians, Mestizos, Ladinos or Castes that had no legal place in the *República de Españoles*.

That enclosure of indigenous people into their own Republic that could keep them docile and loyal, paved the way for the birth of the “pure Indian”, a construction that in the following centuries would become a source of multiple re-creations of *indigenusness* and tutelary policies. The construction of a colonial *indigenusness* was from the very beginning a problem of governmentality, moral order and political control over the Indian labor force. The colonial elite assumed their self-granted right to tutelary action, over a multitude recently converted to Christian faith through *Bulas Papales*, *Ordenanzas*, Provisions, *Reales Cédulas*, *Instrucciones* and other official and non-official dispositions that defined the rules, that individuals should follow in order to create the new society. These documents defined subjects and typified their duties and responsibilities, particularly of those subjugated by a regime of tributes, forced labor and personal services<sup>28</sup>. Indians were prohibited to carry arms, except arches, arrows and “cuchillos, machetes y

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<sup>27</sup> For instance, a reference to understand the formation of colonial *indigenusness* in Guatemala are the instructions about Indian labor and daily life provided in 1603 to Francisco del Valle Marroquín, visitador and administrator of the Valle of Guatemala. The visitador “procurará que trabajen y no anden vagabundos y que crien abundancia de aves de Castilla y de la tierra así como de otros mantenimientos para que tengan para ellos y para traer a vender a la ciudad”. The instructions ordered the building of three houses for servants working at the city. During the years 1570-1620, the relationships between Spaniard and Indian gradually assumed the outlines it would follow for the remainder of the colonial period”. (Sherman 1982:181)

<sup>28</sup> One house would be in the barrio de San Francisco, another one in Santiago and the third in Jocotenango in Antigua Guatemala.

“calabozos”, que son las utilizadas en limpiar sus milpas y cacaotales”<sup>29</sup>. There were also regulations that outlawed “amancebamientos” and “pecados públicos”, and dictated “que los casados tengan cada uno su casa y milpa y que no duerman en el suelo sino en barbacoas”. Thus, indigenous people were stereotypically classified as agricultural workers who provided food for the city or servants working in private houses, convents and official institutions. Although most of these regulations were aimed to keep Spaniards, Blacks and Mestizos separate from Indians,<sup>30</sup> it is interesting to note that a specific regulation was directed at the prevention of Indian nakedness, fixing parameters of dress and undressing that were considered *decent* and *indecent*, as would be the case later with other markers like the body odor, the use of short or long hair, shoes, hats, beds, domestic utensils, arms, and other features that would define cultural boundaries, socio-racial hierarchies and ways of being<sup>31</sup>.

The tutelary action was framed as a way “to protect” Indians from mistreatment<sup>32</sup>, bad costumes, laziness, and “errors and vices” that “threatened” their Christian salvation.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Although these particular dispositions were directed to regulate Indian life, also instructed the organization of “milicias ciudadanas” that were established in response to fears of a rebellion due to the growing number of Indians that were living in the surroundings of Santiago and subject to excessive work. AGI, Guatemala 41, 1 de febrero de 1603 (Suñe 1979:160-161).

<sup>30</sup> Felipe II issued seven Reales Cédulas prohibiting Spaniards, Blacks, Mestizos and Mulattos to live in “pueblos de Indios” because “demás de tratarlos mal, se sirven de ellos, enseñan sus malas costumbres y ociosidad y también algunos errores y vicios que podrán entragar y pervertir el fruto que deseamos en orden a la salvación”. Recopilación Libro VI, Título III, ley 21) en de Solano y Pérez-Lila 1969: 324-325). Apparently Indians were selling their “solares” in 1625 to Spaniards, Blacks and Mestizos to avoid the payment of tributes and that would be the reason why alcaldes and síndicos became owners of Indian lands (Pardo 1978: 74)

<sup>31</sup> “Y porque e bisto por vista de ojos que los indios generalmente en estas provincias andan desnudos en carnes y tan solamente traen un pedazo de corteza de arbol torcida que llaman mastate cubiertas sus vergüenzas y las indias así mesmo andan en carnes de la cintura arriba lo qual es cosa yndesente para rremedio desto: hordenoy mando a los dhos gobernadores y alcandes que como oficiales de rrepublica estos suelen andar bestidos y cubiertas sus carnes aunque a su modo, obliguen de la mesma manera a los demas yndios e yndias de cada uno de sus pueblos a que agan de bestir calsones y ropillas de tela de algodón y las yndias sus naguas y capirote como los traen las criadas de la gente española y que sino fuere quando estuvieren en los trabajos del campo no se desnuden y no lo cumpliendo los castiguen con penas leves de azotes y no lo cumpliendo ellos el gobernador desta provincia quando bisite castigue a los unos y a los otros...” (Pardo 1978:71-72)

<sup>32</sup> An exceptional example of the contradictions of the colonial conception of *indigenouness* in Guatemala, were the Spaniard’s reactions against the reforms promoted by Alonso de López de Cerrato. The colonizers argued that the Indians themselves were fiercely opposing those reforms. “Y si estamos descontentos”, wrote el Cabildo de Santiago, “los nativos están mucho más”. They claimed that “los indios, una vez separados del paternalismo de sus amos, quedaban en peores condiciones que antes, vagando sin rumbo como dementes, confusos de lo que sucedía”. “Ya no temían a los

These early tutelary relationships from the colonial period and the contradictory representations that constituted the constructions of the Indian as docile servant; today continue to shape Guatemala's contemporary conservative and racist imaginary.

### **Bastard nation and *purity of blood***

Female and male bodies were closely monitored and disciplined by the Crown's economic and symbolic demands, following the criteria of "legitimacy" and "illegitimacy" that would regulate marriages and the discriminatory access to land, education, commerce, public office, religious ministry or military service. Early on in the colonial order, there was a clear demarcation between "legitimate" marriages and unions among individuals who fit the racial and cultural standards sanctioned by the authorities; and the "illegitimate" biological unions between Spaniards and Indians, or among Spaniards, Blacks, Mestizos, Ladinos and other castes. This bipolar legality created an ideological framework in which ideas about "legitimacy" and "illegitimacy" gradually became part of the "moral leadership" (Gramsci 1988) that in the following centuries would support the reproduction of hierarchies and the racialization of inequality in Guatemala.

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españoles y se estaban tornando codiciosos y sinvergüenzas". All those "disturbing changes" were making them "indolent". Bustamante, the Governor, pointed out that around 1551, two years after Cerrato's arrival in Guatemala, "los nativos estaban mas descreídos que nunca del Cristianismo y había menos orden y mas carnalidad, robaderas y holgazanería". "La borrachera es casi continua", Bustamante argued, "y muy común en esa área durante los últimos 2 años; y es la raíz de todos sus males y pecados, porque de aquí proviene la idolatría, el incesto y enormes pecados cometidos con madre, hija y hermana ... y si le decimos (a Cerrato) que castigue a los caciques porque es un vicio infernal entre ellos y merecedor de gran sanción, él replica que los indios no deben entrar en la fe a punta de golpes y latigazos; y que los moriscos de Granada también se emborrachan, y así mismo lo hacen algunos Cristianos". In addition, there was a multitude of "indios libertos" that did not want to work even they were going to be paid. They instead preferred just to wander around towns and through villages in the countryside (Sherman 1971). Vagrants and wanderers were not only castes but, there were also poor Spaniards, as in the reference "a los holgazanes, ni vagamundos, de los cuales hay muchos en todas las Indias". (García Añoberos 1991:43)

<sup>33</sup> In a similar vein, Felipe IV dictated in 1646 a mandamiento instructing that Ladinos who already bought lands in "pueblos de indios" were not permitted to live among them. And if they were "mercaderes", Spanish or Mestizos, they could only stay in those "pueblos" a maximum of three days. Despite these ordenanzas and legal dispositions "to save" the Indians from their neighbors, Ladinoization took place and biological mestizaje was not penalized or promoted. The Crown simply sanctioned legitimacy and illegitimacy of the individual's family and offspring.

The scarcity of Spaniard women resulted in a certain flexibility of the dominant morals of miscegenation. However, the Mestizo progeny resulting from unions between Indians and Spaniards was from the very beginning a source of permanent preoccupation for religious ministries<sup>34</sup>. Ecclesiastical authorities were aware of the fate of children born from “illegal” unions between Spaniards and Indian women. Spaniards accepted most of their Mestizo descendants, although in the legal view of religious authorities and royal functionaries, they came from anomalous relationship<sup>35</sup>.

The violent character of early sexual contacts between Spanish men and Indian women was later mythologized in favor of the invader’s historical perspective. A romanticized version of the Amerindian past emerged among the intellectual elite, only when Creoles began to confront the racism of the European Enlightenment. However, that political endeavor rarely included recognition of the demographic and cultural presence of American mestizos. Lo mestizo was considered a “defect” and the criminalization of marriages between Indians and Spaniards, or Indians and Mestizos, as “illegal” or “illegitimate”, contrasted with coerced marriages among Indians. Both strategies worked in

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<sup>34</sup> The Bishop Francisco Marroquín wrote in 1547 supplicating to the Crown’s backing for children of parents that were living in poverty or died while in service, and “para que las doncellas se casen conforme a la calidad” “A V.A. tengo suplicado se acuerde de estos mestizos y mestizas, el remedio que se les debe dar, que es una de las principales partes de buen gobernación para estas gentes; y fue servido enviar una cédula para que la audiencia hiciese relación de cómo se haría. No hay otro cómo sino V.A. mande que de sus reales rentas se gasten como sean doctrinados y las doncellas se casen conforme a la calidad. Gran limosna será y mérito para con Dios Nuestro Señor, pues sus padres son muertos en servicio de V. A. y pobres sin gozar de lo que trabajaron, y otros lo gozan que por ventura no lo sirvieron; V. A. lo provea como más fuere servido”. (Carta del obispo Marroquín al Rey, 20 de septiembre de 1547. AGI Guatemala, 156. La real cédula a que hace mención el documento es de 26 de mayo de 1546) (Suñe 1981: 219-220)

<sup>35</sup> In an act drawn up in 1548 by the Cabildo there is a list of “los vecinos que tienen necesidad”, referring to 34 Spaniards that in average had each one, three or four legitimate children and three “natural” with Indian women (Acta levantada por el cabildo de Santiago de los vecinos que tienen necesidad. Se especifica años de edad, años de permanencia en la tierra y número de hijos. AGC 2196, 15750). The children of Indias and “mero español”, Mestizo or Mestiza, Jewish, Moorish, convicts or their descendants were excluded to enter seminars. An exception, as in the case of the seminar dedicated to Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, could be done if the candidate were “de señalado ingenio y virtud” and was not related in first or second grades with relatives belonging to a stigmatized category. If the aspirant, son of “mero español con Mestiza”, was competing against a Spaniard, the Spaniard would be preferred, “...salvo si la calidad del que tenga parte de Mestizo, fuera tanta que supliera su defecto”. (Suñe 1981:246)

favor of the “legitimacy” and “illegitimacy” that legally sustained the bipolar division of the *República de Indios* and *República de Españoles*<sup>36</sup>.

Colonial regulations of marriages went along with the gendered socialization of women and men beginning in early childhood. While Spanish women were trained to be wives or nuns; one of the main options for daughters of *caciques* and *principales* was the role of the servant. The biological reproduction of the colonial order included the creation of “casas de recogidas”, which prepared young Spanish women “para tomar estado”, meaning to be ready for marriage or for the convent. The “beaterios” trained young daughters of Indian *caciques* to be domestic servants but also “para tomar estado”<sup>37</sup>.

Women’s bodies and their offspring were strongly disciplined by material and symbolic demands organized around “purity of blood”. It is known for instance, that during the XVI century, Spanish heads of households had countless difficulties getting a dowry for each woman. Thus, there were many unmarried daughters of poor Spaniards that had no other future than that of the convent; which also required a dowry (Suñe 1981:231)<sup>38</sup>. There were other cases of colonial policing of women’s bodies, such as the *razzias* of Ladino

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<sup>36</sup> At the bottom of the colonial society, young Indian women “tomaban estado” at a very early age under the pressure of clerics and civil authorities. The first trying to preserve them from their “perdición” and the second, getting through marriage a new tributary family. Other option for these girls was to enter the Spaniard’s homes to work as personal servants, and stay in the master’s house and consequently to abandon their cultural heritage. Their masters had the obligation to educate them and put the orphan girls ready “para tomar estado”. These girls were an important labor force for colonial society and as part of their domestic training, learned, pottery and weaving arts. (Suñe 1981: 234) Encomenderos, empadronadores and parochial clerics forced marriages of children that were twelve to sixteen years old in order to increase tributes for the caja real, the parroquia or the curato. Dr. Pedro Melián, visitador de los pueblos del valle de Guatemala, el 10 de octubre de 1638, arrived to San Juan Amatlán and noticed that young girls that were twelve years old did not result good wives because “no tenían juicio cabal”. In addition in those families that are not united as God and the King mandate, “las mujeres de ordinario se hacen preñadas y por encubrirse y ebitar la vergüenza de los amancebamientos y el castigo que les suelen hacer las justicias, toman bebidas con que abortan y las que paren a la luz aogan impía y bárbaramente sus criaturas sin agua de bautismo y las dan a comer a los animales o las echan en los ríos o las entierran en los muladares, para que no vean como viben...”(Pardo 1978:83)

<sup>37</sup> The “beaterios” were organized around a noble and virtuous lady that put her house and fortune to the loable end of “saving” the young daughters of poor Spaniards, descendants of conquerors or old neighbors. There were also “beaterios” for the young daughters of Indian *caciques* and *principales*(Suñe 1981: 233)

<sup>38</sup> But, even if the woman had dowry, those “colegios” or “casas de recogidas” did not admit Mestizas descendants from Spaniard or Indian father; “metaladas” that belonged to “non-pure lineage”, or women that were descendants of Moor or Jew, or born into an illegitimate marriage. Candidates to be admitted had to be less than ten years old, except in those cases when the aspirant and her parents were of “reconocida virtud”. The goal was “to print virtue in the girls” “as in soft wax”.

women who were captured and forced to marry Indian men “por lo mandaba la virge, porque se aumentase el mundo”<sup>39</sup>, or African women who were “used” to have offspring slaves<sup>40</sup>, or the brutal punishment against Black and Mulatto slaves who dared to “servirse de indias o las tratasen mal”<sup>41</sup>. Physical violence was a central factor in this process of disciplining women and men’s bodies. In addition, legal and moral dispositions constructed legitimacy and illegitimacy for marriages and their progeny. These two phenomena would have a deep impact upon the mental structures of colonizers and colonized people during post-colonial and neo-colonial times.

### **The non-existent Mestizo**

The *República de Españoles* privileged an aristocratic schema that precluded official and private interests from investing in the social and material well-being of the lower class Mestizos, castes and indigenous people in the process of Ladinoization. The mass constructed as “non-indigenous” did not fit into none of the two socio-cultural universes defined as the *Republica de Indios* and the *Republica de Españoles*. Mestizos were perceived as a parasitic group undeserving of the Crown’s protection. They moved around without institutional directions to normalize their social, economic and legal interaction with the rest of society<sup>42</sup>. In the colonial conception of *non-Indigeness*, American mestizos represented most of the negative stereotypes applied to Indians and

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<sup>39</sup> AGI Guatemala 293. In the same expediente about deposiciones de ladinos; there are some women testimonies about the fact that “la virgen mandaba que todas se casasen con indios, para que en adelante no se diferenciassen”, etc. (Zavala 1981: 96)

<sup>40</sup> In the mid-seventeenth century a shortage of slaves in Nicaragua led to a practice of breeding Africans with whites to produce mulatto slaves for sale. African women were kept solely for breeding purposes, it was repeatedly charged, and a trade of their offspring developed with Peru.

<sup>41</sup> By a Real Cedula from 1589 Felipe II ordered that they will received 100 lashes the first time, and the cutting of their ears if they were slave recidivists. But if they were free, the punishment was 100 lashes the first time and perpetual exile, the second. (de Solano 1969: 330)

<sup>42</sup> Sherman affirms that the crown’s attempt to maintain a “two republic” policy, which separated Spanish and Indian populations and guaranteed their distinct rights, was undermined by the birth of Mestizos, who lacked the prerogatives of the colonial elite and the royal protection afforded to the Amerindians.

almost none of the positive ones. *Ladinos*, mestizos and castes were stigmatized as an illegitimate kind of Central American inclined by nature towards laziness, drunkenness, promiscuity, vices and vagrancy. They comprised a wandering multitude that took advantage of Indian oppression, but also suffered from the impact of colonial exclusion.

Another group that was part of Guatemala's colonial world emerged from the importation of African slaves. They were Blacks and Mulattoes who remained slaves, others that were freed and joined the mestizo in the political limbo and some who escaped from the Caribbean coast and to new realms outside Spanish sovereignty. However, Creoles with legally "pure blood", whose faces showed African or Amerindian heritages, ruled in the *cabildos* that protected family privilege based on a supposed lineal descent from the original conquering armies<sup>43</sup>. According to Wortman, "Indian and black blood entered the Creole elite, and if the citizenry continued to claim pure blood, its physical appearance belied its political pretense" (1982:64-65)<sup>44</sup>. Theoretically, the "alternative" system established in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, shared power between Creoles and peninsulares in certain positions, but Mestizos, Mulattoes, and Ladinos were barely recognized legally. The Spanish who came to America in the seventeenth century and eighteenth centuries saw the great physical differences between themselves and their Creole cousins<sup>45</sup>. Language and education had changed as well.

Rivalries between peninsulares and the traditional Creole elite developed, based upon the

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<sup>43</sup> Later, in the eighteenth century, it was transformed somewhat into a seat of merchant, rather than traditional family, power, and in the nineteenth, its authority rose and then collapsed completely under attack by rural elites, and then by the mestizos.

<sup>44</sup> Accordingly with O'Flaherty (1984:169) the society of Santiago de los Caballeros was divided in Españoles (personas de calidad, hijosdalgo, deudos, conquistadores, antiguos pobladores, hijos de conquistador, huérfanos, viudas); Naturales (caciques, principales, indios, indios de cacique, naborías) and Otros (mexicanos/aliados, viudas, mulatos, mestizos, negros)

<sup>45</sup> The complexity of race mixture in Guatemala is exemplified by the family of the chronicler Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán. His older half-brother, Felipe, was the product of the union of his father, Francisco, and a free servant, María de Alvarado, who traced part of her descent to Bernal Díaz del Castillo. The light-colored Felipe was apprenticed as a saddle-maker, joined and rose rapidly in the army, and petitioned the crown in 1680 to allow legal sons to attend the university.

privilege of the Spanish officials and merchants, as well as these social adaptations.

Mestizos could have a clear perspective of their process of social mobility according to their origins, with the exception of sacerdotal consecration that required “limpieza de la sangre”<sup>46</sup>. Individuals, who were considered Ladinos or Mestizos because of their skin color, had access to power positions. This proved that the whitening power of money and political influence challenged the socio-racial discipline which was based on lineage and “purity of blood”<sup>47</sup> (Suñe 1981: 236).

But who were Mestizos and who were Ladinos, and when did they and other groups become conscious of their superior status to Indians and inferior status to Creoles and *peninsulares*? Colonial chroniclers describe colonial Mestizo and Ladino characters in conflict with Indians, but do not provide detail about their cultural repertoires. Modern historians, such as Christopher Lutz, show a more complex socio-cultural and racial landscape of colonial Guatemala different from that conventionally presented in the official history of the two republics<sup>48</sup>. Lutz, for example, discovers a socio-ethnic environment in which Mulattoes, Black slaves and Indian servants constituted a demographic majority in Antigua Guatemala (1984).

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<sup>46</sup> While the sons of conquerors and old neighbors attended schools and later university, those young mestizos coming from the artisan class or poorer, only got a rudimentary instruction and some could have an apprenticeship with officials and masters.

<sup>47</sup> Ejemplo de un Antonio Roque, a black who served in Nicaragua after the end of the seventeenth century and became Captain of the Conquest in Nueva Segovia. A territory that “represented the greatest mestization in the colony in 1682, a portent of later developments. The tax report frankly says that the Spaniards there have no right to that name. The caste population was four times that of the Indians.

<sup>48</sup> “Free competition pervaded Santiago de Guatemala, violating Hapsburg privileges and cabildos power to license food, textile production, and trade. Spaniards provided manufactured goods to mestizo women to sell. Indians sold blankets door to door. Indians and free mulatto women baked bread in their homes. Populations were fluid, and this fluidity was linked to the growth of free and sometimes illegal trade outside the Hapsburg framework. Children from Indian barrios, rural haciendas, and encomiendas were hired as servants in Spanish homes or as aides to artisans. They learned Spanish trades. Young girls bore mestizo children. Their presence and their cheap labor was enough to reduce the demand to import slaves.



During the early colonial period, Ladinos were mestizos<sup>49</sup> and indigenous people who had adopted Castilla's costumes and Spanish language. That means that there were "Ladinos Mestizos" and "Ladinos indigenas"<sup>50</sup>. The term Ladino was applied also to any "indio castellanizado" (de Solano 1969), showing how the cultivation of a colonial indigenusness included attempts to social "integrate" indigenous people into colonial society through *Ladinoization from above*, in contrast with the *Ladinoization from below* that I will examine later. Tomás López's Plans for Castellanization and *Ladinoization from above*, focused on the education of children from the indigenous elite. They would learn how to read and write, mostly "doctrina Cristiana" and so that later some of them would be able to teach their own people (Suñe 1981:224). In order to learn the language, young and adult Indians would interact with Spaniards and "that would give them chances to learn feeding, drinking, dressing, cleaning and socializing habits that in the end would lead them to learn the Spanish language"<sup>51</sup>.

### ***Ladinoization from below***

The Ladino concept varied during colonial times, and refers to a socioeconomic not a racial group (de Solano 1969). Some authors consider Ladinos to be colonial brokers

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<sup>49</sup> In viceroyal times, Solano argues that curas doctrineros working in Guatemala never used the word mestizo.

<sup>50</sup> The regions Nahuatl, Xinca, Pocomam y Chortí were more influenced by castellanización than the regions Quiché and Mam that were more successful in resisting Ladino presence. These definitions in some way announced the subsequent XIX and XX century appearance of Ladinos casta and indios aladinados or the current ladinos populares and indigenas ladinizados.

<sup>51</sup> In the case of young Indians, "hijos de principales", their access to education was very limited. Professional training was reduced to artisan apprenticeship organized around Spaniard masters. Officials took children between 8 to 10 years that would live in the official's home doing housework and in exchange the "maestro" will take care of their physical and "spiritual" health, providing new clothes for the apprentice every year "para que vista con dignidad". (Suñe 1981:238) These contracts or "conciertos" for young Indians could also be celebrated with Indian Ladino officials that were working in their barrios without the government's letter authorizing them to work. (Suñe 1981:239). Many of the first Indios Ladinos came from that process of castellanization and artisan apprenticeship but most of the artisan population was from mestizo origin. Por otro lado, in their case, young wealthy Creoles attended the Colegio de Santo Tomás, established by bishop Marroquín with the tributes paid by Indians from Jocotenango, but later very few went to Mexico's university. The less fortunate learned some "oficio" and after getting their "maestría" installed their own "taller".

between Spaniards and indigenous people. Suñe affirms, for example, that Ladinos could have been an effective vehicle to rapid indigenous hispanization but they decided to be separate from Indians in order to get better jobs, superior status, and access to professions and business opportunities. Ladinos worked as petty-commodity sellers, masons, carpenters, among other occupations<sup>52</sup> and occupied the Valley of Guatemala, the middle regions of the highlands and the lowlands, according with the 1768-1770 Census. Very often they were established near the best properties of the valleys (de Solano 1969: 326) and this location was decisive in their relations and their influence upon “pueblos indios”. Travel routes, roads, cross roads and “cabeceras de distrito” were the preferred places for Ladino settlements. Valleys that had a large Ladino presence were those situated along roads such as Esquipulas, Quesaltepeque, Los Esclavos and Cuajiniquilapa, or on the road to San Salvador, and those that followed the Motagua River towards the Caribbean<sup>53</sup>. As an exception in the appreciation of the Ladino concept we have Ladino population in the western highlands, situated in Tejutla, and Santa Ana Malacatán that controlled the roads that crossed the cordillera. Ladinos went through a process of Indianization in Cuilco and Todos los Santos Cuchumatanes. But in these records there was no mention of Ladinos that were not living in cabeceras or cross roads, as the official stipulation established. Living as agricultural laborers, they constituted a significant portion of the Ladino population, who, according to missionaries’ complaints, did not go to church and rejected the sacraments and the payment of “diezmos”.

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<sup>52</sup> During the XVIII century, there was a big difference between the people from the Valle de Guatemala and the rest of the country due to the concentration of officials and artisans that were living in the city to satisfy Spaniard’s needs. There was a big demand of officials to work on private and public building construction but due to their social and racial origin, Ladinos were excluded from gremios and worked without official authorization. (Suñe Blanco 1981: 220)

<sup>53</sup> Orellana studied the ladino growing from the 1778 census and estimated a ladino population of 80,485 persons; in comparison to 18,777 persons registered during 1768-1770.

Although Castellanization was determined by the work of missionaries, the presence of Ladinos and Mulattoes in specific regions was crucial for both Castellanization and Ladinoization<sup>54</sup>. Ladinos settled in *pueblos, cabeceras* and addressed indigenous people in Castellano. The Ladino phenomenon was born and grew precisely because of the Indian's Castellanization (de Solano 1970). Despite *Reales Cédulas* and *Ordenanzas* forbidding Spaniards, Blacks, Mulattoes and Mestizos, to live in “pueblos de Indios”<sup>55</sup> Ladinoization and Mestization took place<sup>56</sup>.

The Ladino, Black and Mulatto populations inhabited mainly Alcaldías Mayores situated in the lowlands<sup>57</sup>. Mulattoes were effective agents for castellanization. They lived in regions that required abundant force of labor and the same circumstances that worked for the Ladino were valid for Mulattoes in relation to Castellanization. Their participation in the Castellanization of Indians was more visible in haciendas and trapiches and other rural properties owned by Creoles and the Church, who guaranteed the annual payment of a tribute consistent in one *marco de plata*. For the Indians working in those

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<sup>54</sup> Ladino population inhabited the Valley of Guatemala (Alcaldías Mayores from los Amatenes and Chimaltenango); oriental regions (Chiquimula de la Sierra); the Pacific coast (Guazacapán and Suchitepequez); Quetzaltenango and 335 ladinos that lived in Verapaz, in Cobán and Carchá” (de Solano 1969:328). Mulattos were dedicated to agricultural labor in haciendas like Chipilapa and Tacuilula; to cotton harvest and sugar cane in the Pacific coast: Tajisco, Retalhuleu y Samayac. The Mulatto settlements followed the line Tajisco, Chipilapa, Tacuilula, Chimalapa, Retalhuleu, Samayac, and climbed to the sierra until it reached San Pablo Jocopilas y San Miguel Totonicapán. And from there to San Agustín de la Real Corona, Guastatoya and Sanarate; where there were Mulattos working in fincas of rich Creole landowners in (329).

<sup>55</sup> However, that does not mean that they enjoyed free circulation. For mulattoes even if their mothers were Indians, they were obligated to stay always in the same place and had to pay a tribute of an annual marco de plata, as was ordered by Felipe II in 1574 (Recopilación. Libro VI, Título III, Ley 21)

<sup>56</sup> Solano affirms that Mulattoes were rejected by Indians, Ladinos, Creoles and Spaniards. That why is so impressing about the alcalde de Totonicapán's invention to punish Indians. He used to tie a half naked black man with the Indians to whom he was lashing. Cortés y Larraz wrote that that mechanism just increased the “horror and aversion” that Indians had towards blacks. (de Solano 1969: 330).

<sup>57</sup> African slaves had existed in Central America since the sixteenth century, serving in urban areas as domestic servants, traders, mule drivers, and craftsmen. They were allowed to marry free men or women, though their offspring were born into servitude. Africans were able, however, to buy their own freedom, and the prevalence of this practice indicates considerable independent commercial activity by them, as in Havana. Serving as carpenters, masons, street merchants, (Wortman 1982:74) or porters, they earned sufficient funds to free themselves even in times when their price was high” (Wortman 1982:75) “The farmers look to purchase African slaves to provide adequate labor and some haciendas did employ them. But the supply was limited and the price, therefore, high. The Indian labor, supported by the bribe system, was more economical than the purchase of slaves. And in addition authorities and colonials alike feared the growing population of cimarrones, escaped slaves in remote areas; most segments of the colony supported interdictions of the import of slaves. (Wortman 1982:12)

properties, it was possible to learn the language used by the landowner and Ladinos and Mulattos. In general, Ladinos were an element of Castellanization in pueblos, while Mulattoes performed this role in rural areas.

During the XVIII century, the more hispanicized areas were precisely those with higher numbers of Mulattos and Ladinos<sup>58</sup>. Mestizo and Mulatto populations rose through the entire period, according to Christopher Lutz's descriptions of the increase in caste numbers through the mid-eighteenth century<sup>59</sup>. Mulattoes tended to marry Mestizos rather than Indians, and Mestizos married those from all social classes. Indeed, in the late seventeenth century, the Creole population accepted the offspring of Mestizo-Spanish unions as *vecinos*<sup>60</sup>. Wortman (1982:179) affirms that "unlike the seventeenth century, Central America in the late eighteenth century possessed a large non-Indian class that worked for wages or under debt peonage, and Ladinos and Indians who had taken refuge in haciendas". Overall, the repartimiento had diminished replaced by peonage. Simultaneously the western economy, the intracolonial market economy, large landholdings and government centralization, all grew in importance as well. With these transformations, there was an increase in the mestizo population. Disease and labor pressure, forced Indians to flee *pueblos* for cities, to become ladinoized and for their

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<sup>58</sup> All the south, in the pacific coast from Escuintla y Texcuaco to Pasaco and Jutiapa; in the East, from Jalapa and Zacapa and Esquipulas; in the highlands from immediacy to the capital and the rich valleys bordering the lago Amatitlán, in the haciendas near Quetzaltenango and the cuenca alta del Motagua, around Salamá.

<sup>59</sup> Throughout the colony there were more Blacks and Mulattoes than Mestizos and the growth of a large mestizo population was not as yet as great as after 1680. Certainly there were mestizos in Santiago and elsewhere, but they did not become significant until the great epidemics at the turn of the XVII century and later on with the invasion of the western economy and its wage system in the XVIII century (Wortman 1982:86) Lutz demographic study is revealing. Marriages of Spaniards rose from 1570 until 1670, leveled off for a decade, then generally declined for reasons that will later be suggested. The population of mestizos and mulattos rose continuously through the colonial period. "Santiago de Guatemala", pp. 516-520

<sup>60</sup> En 1650 se produce la última arribada de negros a Guatemala (de Solano 1970: 297). Guatemala abolish slavery of blacks in 1812 and apparently was the first country in the American hemisphere in doing it (Martínez y Contreras 1962:225)

offspring to intermarry (Wortman 1982:179)<sup>61</sup>. There were constant complaints that, “many Spanish, Mulattoes and other castes have gathered in the valley’s *pueblos* and commit many crimes” (Ibid: 83). In the areas around the capital, Indians began to “hide” their race and escape the tribute payments migrating to cities, calling themselves soldiers, according to the custom of Mulattoes and Blacks. Others went to other Indian towns, claiming to pay their tribute in another jurisdiction, or went to cities to marry Mestizos or Mulattoes. Some took refuge in the church or in haciendas. Mestization expanded (Wortman 1982:101)<sup>62</sup>. This mestization or Ladinoization from below shows how “Indians fled not only to other provinces, but also to towns and cities. They became Ladinos. And Ladinos were frequently confused with Mestizos in documents. Mestizos, on the other hand, were sometimes included in Spanish documents. (Ibid: 290)

Guatemala’s colonial order subjected indigenous people to an exploitative regime that forced their Ladinoization or their self-definition as Mestizos, Ladinos, castes or non-

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<sup>61</sup> Indian pueblos caught by their proximity to Honduras or Salvador suffered greatly, in particular, those of Chiquimula and Sacapa. They sent repartimientos to the Honduran mines in the thirties, to indigo works in the forties, and then for the construction of the Omoa road in the fifties. After the road was completed, they were compelled to provide beasts and their own backs for the transport of goods and men to and from the port. These obligations depopulated the towns, converting them into centers of non-Indian population as the survivors became ladinos, functioning within the Spanish money economy. (Wortman 1982:178). Some fled to the countryside and to haciendas where Mestizos flourished (Wortman 1982:181). Haciendas were beginning to surround Indian pueblos, particularly in the Amatitlán area, cutting Indians off from their lands. To east and south of the valley, this trend was even more marked. Because of the geographical position of Chiquimula de la Sierra and Sacapa –between Salvadoran indigo fields, Santiago and Honduran mines- the Indigenous population was drafted for labor more often and mestization developed faster. They raised horses and mules to carry indigo from Salvador to Oaxaca or the Honduran coast and cattle for Santiago. (Wortman 1982:83). Cortés y Larraz reported forasteros, Indians and castes in transit from one hacienda to another, absent from their pueblos and families. Pueblos were in a marked decline in the years of the first impact of the western economy. Forasteros, from other provinces wandered to San Antonio Suchitepequez, while the natives vanished. “I understand that many go begging in haciendas and trapiches, many hide in the mountains. Others go to the Lacandones”. Here as in Sonsonate, Escuintla, Guazacapán, Sacapa, Santiago Atitlán, and elsewhere he saw the same phenomenon: “It is impossible to know how many people live in the haciendas ...Today they are here and tomorrow, elsewhere”. Indeed, his observations of the Guatemalan highlands provide a striking contrast with the 1682 report. Now the men of once cohesive pueblos with strong local economies wandered to earn a living. In an attempt to muster additional labor for indigo fields, the government altered repartimiento to include castes in draft labor for the first time. Alcaldes mayores and indigo growers were ordered to draw up a list of growers and available manpower. Friars were warned not to protect their wards against labor draft unless they were involved in indigo production. All Ladinos, Mulattoes, Mestizos, “Sambos”, Blacks, “and the other castes” were required to work in obras” .

<sup>62</sup> Mestization was more advanced through Nicaragua, Granada, and León than it was in Santiago or Ciudad Real. The slaving raids of the sixteenth century had depleted the province’s Indian population, who were by 1682 mostly held in encomiendas to finance pensions in Guatemala and military expenditures. Mestizo labor was supplemented with slaves (Wortman 1982:85) imported for personal service and military duty.

Indigenous. Indigenous people looked for ways to liberate themselves from the ominous workload and Ladinoization was for them an important way to achieve a new status within the colonial socio-racial hierarchy. As would happen during the XIX and XX centuries, their self-definition as non-Indigenous became for many, a protective shield against the excruciating exigencies of coerced and forced labor. Mestizos, Ladinos, Mulattoes, Blacks and castes had in their conscious *non-indigenouness* a protective vehicle to move away from the radical exclusion and abuses suffered by those that were legally and culturally considered Indians.

### **The non-indigenous umbrella**

Most of the works related to Guatemalan seventeenth and eighteenth century are primarily concerned with the elite mentality, the emergence of a Creole collective consciousness, the artistic products of Creole culture, or the economic activities of late colonial elites (MacLeod 1985)<sup>63</sup>. But the history of Guatemala's colonial society needs to explore racial and socio-cultural intricacies of indigenous and Mestizo lower classes that are not included in the Creole perspective. Although few Creoles at the end of the seventeenth century could legitimately call themselves the descendants of the conqueror, the use of the word "conqueror" and "early colonizer" in petitions to the crown carried some weight. Through tradition, Creoles were linked to the authority created by the conquest.

Spanish merchants or government officials wishing to establish themselves in the colony

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<sup>63</sup> "The five great Central American colonial chroniclers, Antonio de Remesal, Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán, Francisco Vásquez, Francisco Ximénez, and Pedro Cortés y Larraz, began this "macro" tradition, (top down) and it continued to flourish in the nineteenth and twentieth century in the works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Santiago I. Barberena, Antonio Batres Jauregui, Ernesto Chinchilla Aguilar, Francisco de Paula García Peláez, Domingo Juarros, Jorge Lardé y Larín, José Milla, Lorenzo Montúfar and J. Antonio Villacorta Calderón. All of these chroniclers and historians covered a multitude of topics, but in general their writings were preoccupied with political events and the social, cultural, and economic history of the civil and clerical elites and governments. The main works of Sidney D. Markman, Severo Martínez Peláez, Manuel Rubio Sánchez, André Saint-Lu, and Ralph Lee Woodward are concerned with ethnohistory and regional culture change only to a secondary degree". (MacLeod 1985)

had to marry into the Creole elite to gain access to labor, economic privileges, and social standing<sup>64</sup>. The colonial Creole elite coalesced with the Mestizo, Ladino and caste-like stratum situated above the indigenous workforce. The *non-indigenesness* repertoires became a cultural and political marker that united a heterogeneous coalition of racial, economic and social interests with its own internal commonalities and contradictions.<sup>65</sup>

### ***Lanas, chapines and guanacos: the XIX century popular ladino***

In Guatemala, as in some other Latin American countries, the tendency within the State and the dominant society during the post-colonial period was to redefine political and cultural relations within a national frame that officially separated indigenous and non-indigenous people. From the elite's point of view, Mestizos had the worst qualities of Indians, Blacks and Castes, although many Mestizos from all social levels, negotiated Whiteness and supported the propagation of values and myths of white supremacy. This denial of mestizo identity among mestizos acted simultaneously as a rejection of indigenous roots and a self-denigration of their condition as non-white natives. Many mestizos mainly from middle and lower strata negated their own biological or cultural ancestry, and that

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<sup>64</sup> The Guatemalans, in turn, welcomed this new and rare "pure blood" from Spain as well as the new money to restore family properties and, perhaps, a connection to the court with its possibilities of pensions or favorable judicial decisions. The center of traditional legal privilege was the *cabildo* of Guatemala". Law and the *cabildo* power. Law and legal institutions were important despite the fact that they failed to encompass all of the new society. "Creole authority was established as well through the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Mercedians who administered the Indian barrios of Santiago and the valley's pueblos. These friars, many of whom were the children of the Creole elite, bridged the "two republics", ensuring a continued supply of labor for the city's existence. (Wortman 1982:64-66)

<sup>65</sup> The surge toward independence was a Creole movement and once independence was achieved, Indians lost some strength to protest against abuses through the church, the fiscal, and to the crown. "For Indians, independence meant increased subjugation. Later, under the new republic, the liberal reforms of Mariano Galvez encountered a fierce resistance from indigenous people that were suffering a cholera epidemic. The colonial order dissolved into the disorder of the nation, until the Indian, mestizo, and mulatto "bandits" and rebels converged around regional leaders at the end of the 1830s to create a semblance of stability for the mid-nineteenth century. Thus, in many ways, the true revolution occurred, not in 1821, but from 1838 to 1840". (Wortman 1982: 247). Colonial castes and popular Ladinos had their more salient protagonism during the popular uprising led by Rafael Carrera, a mestizo proclaimed *Rey de los Indios*, supported by conservatives and the Catholic Church. For the first time the lower classes in Guatemala, some Indians, many mestizos and Mulattoes rose and became aware of the power that they held. The rural laborers, the masses, those groups that had been conquered by the Spanish colonial system reacted against the radical changes in law, in order, and in the basic traditions that Independence had brought (Wortman 1982:183).

symbolic negation was explicitly expressed as denigration of all non-Whites, as can be seen in XIX and XX century newspapers, official documents and literature.

José Milla, a Creole writer, portrayed a cultural landscape of caste interaction, in which the *chapín* and the *guanaco* were also very visible from the perspective of the Creole elite resident in Guatemala City<sup>66</sup>. In many ways, the XIX century Guatemalan *chapín* could be related to the modern Mexican *ñero*, *lépero*, *naco* o *pelado*, which defines the popular mestizo. But in the Guatemalan case, the derogatory label *chapín* became the term

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<sup>66</sup> Con el propósito de rastrear los orígenes del ladino casta o no-blanco a mediados del siglo diecinueve es interesante examinar al respecto, los retratos sobre el lana, el chapín y el guanaco, elaborados por José Milla y Vidaurre desde su perspectiva criolla y no-indígena durante los años de la dictadura de Rafael Carrera. El lana, por ejemplo, “no es precisamente un hombre sin oficio; puede muy bien ser un zapatero remendón, albañil chapucero, o tejedor de esos a quienes el comercio libre vino a reducir a una situación muy apurada” (...) “Socarrón y malicioso, enemigo nato de los chancletudos, con cuya denominación despreciativa, designa a las personas de condición más favorecida que la suya, localista decidido, valiente en la ocasión, vivo, sagaz, y hasta ingenioso algunas veces, el lana es el chapín por excelencia, reuniéndose en él, aquilatados, los defectos y las buenas cualidades del hijo de la capital”. A juzgar por las características del *lana*, capitalino, valiente, vivo, sagaz, ingenioso, localista, socarrón y malicioso, *el chapín por excelencia*, estamos ante el ladino urbano, artesano, desempleado o empleado temporal que desde entonces ya se reconoce como un crítico explícito de las diferencias de clase; alguien que representa la antesala de la barbarie indígena pero que dada su condición ciudadana se le tolera como un pícaro que entretiene con sus gracejos y desde su posición subordinada no representa mayor amenaza para el statu quo, a no ser por sus críticas a los *chances*. El *lana* ladino es equivalente al artesano mestizo desempleado del período de las dictaduras cafetaleras (1871-1944), usualmente aficionado al consumo del alcohol, los “bailes de tacón de hueso”, las relaciones con prostitutas, las riñas de cantina y la preferencia por la vida en concubinato, amasiato o unión de hecho con una o varias mujeres con las cuales se procrean hijos por lo general *naturales* o ilegítimos. Al cuadro también se asocian las enfermedades venéreas, la resistencia pasiva al trabajo, la propensión al ilícito y el acatamiento poco o nulo de las leyes del Estado. Una reflexión sobre el *lana* obliga a recordar que la economía de agroexportación fue incapaz de generar suficientes empleos y nunca asumió un régimen de plenas relaciones salariales que hubiera permitido mejores canales de movilidad social para las capas medias y las clases trabajadoras de la ciudad y el campo. Una importante mayoría fue condenada a vivir errante recorriendo fincas y poblados en busca de tierra y de trabajo; durmiendo en la calle, los mercados, los mesones o las plazas, viviendo en promiscuidad y criando a los hijos sin casa y sin escuela. El *lana* entonces sugiere en algún sentido una imagen del desempleado ladino tipificado como vago que llena un voluminoso espacio de la historia criminal, laboral y cultural de la mayoría subordinada mestiza. No deja de ser ilustrativo además que el calificativo *lana* se utiliza todavía en Guatemala para referirse a la persona que utiliza un lenguaje soez para expresarse o que acostumbra llevar una vida mas o menos disoluta en la que la ética del trabajo no es prioritaria. En la taxonomía socio-étnica de Milla, por debajo del *lana* está el cucuxque que es “la encarnación de la miseria y de la degradación humana, es el prototipo de la incuria, de la suciedad y del abandono, es el sulfato de la pobreza y la quintaesencia de la necesidad. Es algo peor que el gueaux de los franceses, que el beggar de los ingleses, que el pordiosero de los españoles. Ninguno de los diferentes tipos de mendigos que puedan representar esos nombres iguala la miseria, la repugnante asquerosidad y la abyección del cucuxque. Figúrese el lector un hombre de mediana estatura, enjuto de carnes, de color cobrizo, entrecano de cabello y barba, que descubre en la mirada y en la risa la estupidez y la indolencia, de andar dificultoso, vestido con los harapos de un traje de forma y de color indefinible, apoyado en un largo y grueso bastón y que lleva pendiente de un cordel, en el brazo izquierdo, una ollita de barro, sucia y negra, y tendrá una idea aproximada de la catadura de Tata Nicho, el cucuxque”. Por otro lado, chapín, según Sandoval, es un adjetivo que en el Oriente de Guatemala se aplica a “los patojos descalzos y niguentos” que por este motivo no andan bien. Asimismo se dice de los caballos que tienen los cascos muy planos y que no pueden caminar sin herraduras. En la misma región llaman *chapines* especialmente a los habitantes de la capital, quienes, como romeros, van al santuario de Esquipulas y quienes, por el daño o maltrato de los pies cojean mucho al marchar. Santiago Barberena en su diccionario de Quicheísmos dice por su lado que *chapín* es un epíteto despectivo con que el vulgo designa en El Salvador a los guatemaltecos. Por su parte Alberto Membreno en sus Hondureñismos publicados en México en 1912 y Carlos Gagini en su Diccionario de Costariqueñismos dicen ambos que “*chapín* es el patojo niguento”(260)



that identifies nationals from Guatemala. Originally, *chapines* were those mestizos living in Guatemala City downtown, and *guanacos* were all those who did not live in the restricted space controlled by the elite at the center of the city<sup>67</sup>. The prejudices of Whiteness about the inferiority of the rural, non-capitalino gave support to the *sentimiento criollo anti-guanaco*, a sentiment intermingled with caste prejudice and the inferiorization of the other Central Americans elites different from the one resident at Guatemala City.

### ***Mestizaje eugenésico and regressive modernization***

It was not until the Liberal regime of Justo Rufino Barrios (1871-1885) that Ladinos entered the State as a modernly integrated socio-political group, legally identified as the national counter-part of indigenous people. This legal reinforcement of *non-*

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<sup>67</sup>En la descripción de José Milla sobre el *guanaco*, puede observarse con mayor claridad la forma en que la elite oligárquica de la capital guatemalteca estigmatizó al fuereño, el no capitalino a quien se compara con el animal del mismo nombre nativo de América del Sur. “Llamamos *guanaco* -dice el autor- no sólo al que ha nacido en los Estados de Centro América que no son el de Guatemala, sino a los naturales de los mismos pueblos de la república. Así oímos hablar frecuentemente de *guanacos* de Guastatoya, de Cuajiniquilapa, de Amatitlán, etcétera; y algunos hay que llevan el rigor localista hasta el extremo de calificar con aquel apodo a los habitantes de los barrios de esta ciudad”. Milla observa mas adelante situándose fuera de la escena: “Lo que el portugués es para el castellano, es el *guanaco* para el *chapín* del vulgo. No hay anécdota ridícula que éste no atribuya a aquel; y si se trata de un recién venido *bayunco*, es bien sabido que se ha de decir de él que se arrodilla delante de las boticas que toma por altares; que reza al mascarón del correo; que pide en la nevería agua caliente para entibiar los helados; que se asombra de que los *chapines* edificasen la ciudad en este pedrero, habiendo cerca llanos tan hermosos; que pregunta si la catedral es hecha aquí, y otras ocurrencias semejantes, que prueban menos mala voluntad, que deseo de embromar y de divertirse”. Bayunco, es un calificativo de la persona montaraz, tosca, grosera, burda, rústica, etc. que también se usa en Guatemala para calificar a los habitantes de El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua y Costa Rica, que en este sentido equivale a *guanaco* (Sandoval 1941:113) Un dicho que sintetiza admirablemente la estigmatización del que no es criollo capitalino es el de “Indio, *guanaco* y zanate, manda la ley que se mate”, que según Sandoval “alude a lo ingrato, traidor y falso que son las personas mencionadas y a los daños y perjuicios que hace el pájaro citado”. (671). Es interesante como en este eslabonamiento de miradas, el ojo criollo de Milla sitúa a los *chapines* ridiculizando a los *guanacos*, pero no menciona la reacción opuesta presente en las imágenes y apelativos con que el resto de los centroamericanos proyectan sus resentimientos en contra de los hijos de la capital de Guatemala. La denominación *chapín*, según Lisandro Sandoval en su Semántica Guatemalteca, es un apodo con que los habitantes de El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua y Costa Rica designan a los naturales de Guatemala; pero en la creencia de que éstos consideran o aceptan ese nombre con significación despectiva, denigrante o injuriosa, tal como aquéllos lo estiman; y esto no es exacto, pues los mismos guatemaltecos se llaman entre sí *chapines* (diciendo por ejemplo, “a nosotros los *chapines* nos encanta la poesía”. No sucede otro tanto en los países centroamericanos mencionados con respecto a los apodos *guanaco* y *guáfiro* con que nosotros los nombramos. Jamás hemos oído, ni visto escrito, que un salvadoreño, hondureño, nicaraguense o costarricense diga o escriba en un periódico, verbigracia: “Nosotros los *guanacos* amamos la libertad”. Pareciera ser que el pleito entre *guanacos* y *chapines* es asunto entre ladinos pero que será capitalizado a favor de los criollos guatemaltecos y a costa del sacrificio de lo guatemalteco centroamericano o de lo centroamericano a secas que refleja las pugnas entre federalistas y centralistas.

*indigenusness* permitted the radical re-articulation of economic and political power in detriment of indigenous people and in the name of capitalism and civilization.

For several decades the political and economic emergence of Ladinos has been emphasized as one of the major changes that redefined the new terms of interaction within Guatemala's socio-racial hierarchy (Taracena Arriola 2002). Although the appearance of the Ladino power during the Liberal Reform constitutes a major transformation in national politics, very few analyses have addressed the crucial role of foreign immigrants and corporations in the country's cultural and socio-racial fabric. The new national Ladino-Creole elite actively incorporated European planters and North American corporations, whose presence contributed significantly to solidify the symbolic power of whiteness for civilization and the redefinition of *non-indigenusness* within the Ladino world as an important factor of white supremacy and nation building. Despite its outstanding importance as a strategic factor in the construction of Guatemala's cultural modernity and capitalist regressive modernization; foreign immigration, mainly from Europe and United States, has been completely ignored or underestimated in the analysis of ethnicity and interethnic relations framed within the Indian-Ladino dichotomy.

As national actors, foreign immigrants, mostly Germans, French, Spaniards, Italians, Britons and North Americans, imported industrial goods, technology and cultural values that favored the dissemination of "scientific" and popular beliefs about white supremacy and the indigenous and mestizo innate inferiority. Creole and Ladino Guatemalans enthusiastically endorsed Euro-American prejudices, manners and worldviews, placing themselves above indigenous people and popular Ladinos that before the Liberal Reform were considerate *castes*. The combination of authoritarian governments and the cosmopolitanism associated with foreign immigration solidified the prominence of

whiteness and the official and social criticism against *mestizaje indigena*". Foreign immigration and *mestizaje eugenésico* made whiteness almost synonymous with Civilization for the elite completely oriented to the values and history of Europe and United States. Guatemalan liberals adopted US immigration criteria, which explicitly preferred Nordic and Anglo Saxon immigrants over Mediterranean or East European immigrants. However, despite its generous provisions, Guatemala's policy to attract immigrants could not compete with that of United States, Argentina, Uruguay or Chile. The cosmopolitanism associated with agro-export economy inferiorized *provincianos*, and rural and illiterate people; reaffirming the racial and cultural superiority of white immigrants, and Creole and Ladino oligarchs over indigenous people, popular Ladinos, Afro-Guatemalans and Guatemalans from Asian ancestry.

The XIX century Guatemalan Liberalism reached its enlightened climax during the administration of General José María Reina Barrios (1892-1898), which celebrated the Fourth Centennial of America's Discovery with a *Concurso para premiar la mejor propuesta para lograr la Civilizacion de los Indios*, the foundation of an *Instituto Agrícola de Indigenas* and the *Primer Congreso Pedagógico Centroamericano* with the same goal of the *Concurso*. During Reyna's administration, Guatemala's official nationalism was reorganized. The State and its intellectuals explicitly advocated the central role of the "creation of wants and needs" as a mechanism to incorporate indigenous people into Civilization, consumerism and the modern spaces of the "homogeneous nation". Reyna created the "símbolos patrios", "escudo", flag, national anthem and begun a series of public works to embellish the city coinciding with a time of economic decline that send the country into economic bankruptcy.

Later, Manuel Estrada Cabrera a lawyer that would last twenty two years in power (1898-1920) and was stigmatized by Creole intellectuals as bastard descendant of Indians, Blacks and the worst breeding of the most inferior genetic pool already existent in Guatemala; consolidated the labor force system that benefited local landowners and foreign corporations. As part of Euro-North American encyclopedic influences, during the 1920s and 1930s Guatemala's political and intellectual circles dominated by Creoles, Ladinos and descendants of foreign immigrants, reshaped known views on eugenics, and adapted to the analysis of the national socio-racial hierarchy. Most of the socio-racial beliefs of their discourses were formulated around the *racial degeneracy* of Indians and popular Ladinos associated to *laziness* and the pertinence of forced labor and dictatorship as eugenic ways to modernize society.<sup>68</sup>. That regressive assumption that became hegemonic, openly supported the landowner's demands of more *brazos* for their plantations. The 1920s and 1930s were the most active decades in labor legislation, and debates in newspapers and in the National Assembly were strongly oriented towards the construction of vagrancy and the vagrant's figure. The discourse on vagrants and vagrancy was justified by the assumption that indigenous and Ladino people were "lazy by nature". Then, forced labor would accomplish the dual goal of supporting the growth of the national economy, and civilizing the barbarians.

### **Vagrancy and Criminalization**

Among the laws that favored the criminalization of poverty and the politics of retrogressive modernization in Guatemala during the republican era, were: *Ley contra la*

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<sup>68</sup> Ver Rafael Arévalo Martínez. "La degeneración racial de Centroamérica", en *Centro América*, v. II, n.2, 1919, pp. 1-2; César Brañas. "La degeneración del ladino", en *El Imparcial*, 16 de enero de 1930; y Jorge Cañizares. "New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600-1650", en *American Historical Review*, febrero, 1999, pp. 33-68.

*Vagancia y la Holgazanería de 1825 (Decreto n. 24); Ley de Vagancia de 1878 (Decreto n. 221); Ley de Vagancia de 1934 (Decreto n. 1996); Reglamento relativo a los jornaleros para trabajos agrícolas de 1935; Reglamento para el manejo y control de los libretos de mozos de 1936; y Ley de Vagancia de 1945 (Decreto n. 118).*

In 1825 the government decreed a *Ley contra la Vagancia y la Holgazanería* that suspended temporarily the rights of citizenship of those considered vagrants. The law was aimed at artisans, small landholders, students and “escribientes sin plaza o destino fijo en oficinas públicas”. The law was based on three “considerandos”: 1) the “apoyo de los gobiernos libres son las buenas costumbres”; 2) “el trabajo es el mejor preventivo contra el vicio”, and 3) “la ociosidad su mal común origen y su inmediato resultado la embriaguez y los delitos atroces que horrorizan a la humanidad y contrastan el dulce carácter de los hijos del Estado...” Following the liberal legacy, this law appealed to “good customs” as “the support of free governments”, replicating the lay statement that asserted the role “free men and of good costumes” were called to play in the society’s political fabric. Tuned to the civilizing virtues of labor discipline in vogue in modern Europe at the beginning of XIX century, the law stated that work was “the best prevention against vice”, and vice in itself, originating from laziness, resulted in drunkenness and “atrocious crimes that horrify humanity in contrast with the sweet character of the State and his sons”. The tutelary spirit of the law presented the fact of being citizen as equal to being a father’s son. The State as father and the citizen as his son (not his daughter) created an idea of citizenship as a set of tutelary relationships decided by men in power. That is one of the main ideological references upon which future legislators would draw up regulations, reinforcing masculine and patriarchal figures that rewarded the obedient citizen and punished the rebellious deviant, particularly if he/she was poor, marginal, artisan, servant, unemployed or

indigenous small landholder<sup>69</sup>.

A central parameter in this legal conception was the role *laziness* played in the origin of crimes and drunkenness, as one of its worst concomitants<sup>70</sup>. Vagrants whose rights of citizenship, had been suspended could recover them if they were eligible for recruitment as soldiers for the Army. In this respect, it is important to note how being part of the army became a political vehicle for the restitution of citizenship rights; a procedure that in the following decades would justify authoritarianism and the tutelary character of the State and the Army upon citizens<sup>71</sup>. It was a convenient way, as during the twentieth century, to recruit unpaid soldiers among those “que no tienen ocupación, no ejercen su oficio, o no tienen modo de vivir reconocido”.

The penalization of vagrancy included not only the criminalization of poverty and political dissidence but the normalization of public spaces under authoritarian criteria, establishing what were the “right” and “wrong” parameters, socially accepted for idleness, social life, “free time”, leisure time and entertainment. As if the State had the right to penalize not only common crimes but also the way people invested their “leisure time”, the law of 1825 among several others promulgated during the XIX and XX century, targeted the vagrant, the lazy and the “mal entretenido”. That strategy contributed to the construction of “buenas” and “malas costumbres” and the moral framework that disciplined

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<sup>69</sup> The law established that public officials, were on charge of preventing “delitos contra los particulares y contra el orden publico” and “velarán muy eficazmente, y bajo la responsabilidad mas estrecha acerca de los que no tienen empleo, oficio, ni modo de vivir conocido”. They will go after “...vagos, holgazanes y mal entretenidos, considerándoles suspensos en el ejercicio de los derechos de la ciudadanía, y les reducirán a prisión, previa sumaria que justifique sus malas calidades”. That “sumaria” would be unnecessary if they were arrested under drunkenness or captured in fraganti committing some crime. They were subject to 48 hours of verbal trial, and 8 days later would get their final sentence. Their punishment included to work without any payment in “casas de corrección”, hospitals, jails and public works during a maximum of two years, if there was not another additional crime.

<sup>70</sup> The government had the right to “allanar la casa de algún ciudadano”, “y con mayor razón si dicha casa fuera sospechosa, ya que por que en ella se vendan licores fuertes, ya porque se abriguen malhechores y criminales”.

<sup>71</sup> The law established that “los vagos que hallándose en edad proporcionada para tomar las armas no tubieren vicios ni malas calidades, sino que solo sean vagos, ya porque no tengan oficio, o por que no quieran ejercerlo, seran destinados al servicio de la fuerza permanente por el tiempo de una recluta y contratado en el cupo de hombres que corresponda al Estado”.

people's life and their world view.

That moral contention is also clear in the *Decreto sobre la vagancia*, promulgated by General Justo Rufino Barrios in 1878 (Decree n. 221). This decree established in its *considerandos*: 1) “Que es un deber de la autoridad dictar todas las providencias que conduzcan al sostenimiento de la moral pública y a reprimir oportunamente los vicios, que rebajando la dignidad personal y pervirtiendo los sentimientos de pundonor, producen, por consecuencia necesaria, la relajación de las costumbres y determinan la perpetración de los delitos; and 2) Que la vagancia, considerada como un hecho punible, ha sido comprendida como tal en la legislación de los pueblos civilizados”. In accord with this decree, it is the State's duty to protect public morality and opportunely repress “vices that diminish personal dignity and pervert feelings of “pundonor” that provoke relaxation of costumes and perpetration of crimes”. Here again, there is a sensible preoccupation with the legal means of life, and the official administration of leisure time, practice of begging, drunkenness and restrictions of public gatherings. And as in posterior laws with the same punitive spirit, this law sanctioned even the loud voice of beggars asking for public charity<sup>72</sup>. Although this was not a draconian law as would be the *Reglamento de Jornaleros* (1877), its concern with moral and public order and the normalization of leisure time shows how the Guatemalan version of time discipline under capitalism, was formulated to take advantage of unpaid labor in the name of the struggle against laziness,

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<sup>72</sup> The decree considered vagrants: 1) Those without profession, occupation, income, wage, or licit means of life; 2) Those that having profession, occupation or industry decided not to work and lack licit means of subsistence; 3) Those without enough means to subsist and that regularly visit “casas de juego o tabernas”; 4) Beggars 5) Mendicants without permission. Aggravating circumstance of these conditions were drunkenness, hanging out in corners, public places, “atrios de iglesias”, being in “fondas”, “tabernas” and billars, at the time these places should be closed; or those that practice mendicancy with a fake permit. Those permits were reserved only for people with some “impedimento físico o por decrepitud ostensible, (que) se hallaren en la absoluta necesidad de ocurrir a la beneficencia pública para proveer a su subsistencia”. The punishment: 40 days working in “talleres del gobierno, casas de corrección, en servicio de hospitales, en la limpieza de plazas, paseos públicos, cuarteles u otros establecimientos, o bien al trabajo de caminos, según las circunstancias de la persona y de cada lugar”.

crime and vice.

Liberals explicitly rejected any attempt to modernize labor relations or to promote *mestizaje* as an official ideology that could provide the ideological substance for the institutional development of a “national culture”. Guatemalan filo-eugenicists admired the “pure Indian” and openly expressed their concern with the racial and cultural decline of Ladinos. As it has been explained by Arturo Taracena (1988), under the influence of Jose Vasconcelos’ ideas about the “cosmic race”, a group of Ladino and Creole intellectuals, headed by Miguel Ángel Asturias, imagined that the construction of the Guatemalan “National Soul” would fuse the Indian and the Spanish heritage in a single legacy. Later, Manuel Gamio (1930) suggested the implementation of *mestizaje eugenésico*, a special kind of *mestizaje* that would “elevate” the indigenous and Ladino condition through their mix with European immigrants<sup>73</sup>. This particular improvement of the national genetic stock through foreign immigration was present in the writings of Asturias, Jorge del Valle Matheu, Fernando Juárez Muñoz, Rafael Arévalo Martínez, César Brañas and Jorge Garcia Granados. Their ideas of *mestizaje* were primarily oriented to the whitening of Ladinos and only rarely to nation building based on *mestizaje indígena* as in the Mexican institutional and political experience advocated by Vasconcelos (Tenorio 1996).<sup>74</sup>

Guatemalan authorities were worried about the example of Mexican revolution and the

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<sup>73</sup> Manuel Gamio. “El mestizaje eugenésico en la población de la América Indoibérica”, en *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala*, Vol. VI, No.3, marzo, 1930, pp. 333-337. También Julio C. Cambranes. *El imperialismo alemán en Guatemala*, Editorial Universitaria, Guatemala, 1977.

<sup>74</sup> Ver Jorge Ramón González Ponciano. *Diez años de indigenismo en Guatemala. La primera época del Instituto Indigenista Nacional (1944-1954)*, Escuela Nacional de Antropología, México, 1988; “Acerca del café, los indios y el Iluminismo: la experiencia del Instituto Agrícola de Indígenas durante el régimen del general José María Reina Barrios, 1892-1898”, en *Memorias del Primer Encuentro de Intelectuales Chiapas-Guatemala*, Gobierno del Estado, Chiapas, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, México, 1991; y “Degeneración racial y nacionalismo indigenista. El pensamiento antropológico guatemalteco, 1920-1931”, en *Memorias del II Encuentro de Intelectuales Chiapas-Centroamérica*, Gobierno del Estado, Chiapas, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, México, 1992, pp. 294-307.



influence of Vasconcelos' ideas on Guatemalan intellectuals<sup>75</sup>. These fears were almost eliminated by the rise in power of General Jorge Ubico (1931-1944), a white oligarch who considered himself a synthesis of Napoleón, César and Roosevelt. Ubico is the Guatemalan president that best represents the power of whiteness and retrogressive modernization in the country's modern history.

### **Whiteness and Igualamiento**

Ubico was head of the State for 14 years (1931-1944) during which time vagrants, criminals and communists were jailed, executed or sent to forced labor. Ubico had an "iron hand" to manage public finances, and a "steel hand" to control civil liberties (Guerra Borges 1988:25-47). He is undoubtedly the emblematic governor of whiteness in Guatemala and the paradigmatic dictator capable of imposing order in the State and throughout the country. Ubico became a sort of public parameter that stills measures the requirements of honesty and efficiency that every president should meet in Guatemala before taking office. The myth was created with Ubico's conscious planning and fondness for his own self-assumed masculine "beauty", patriarchal guidance, racial superiority, bravery, and other qualities that evoke some of Benito Mussolini's most known egocentric obsessions about race and moral superiority. Ubico explicitly addressed Mussolini as one of his main symbolic references, the others being César and Napoleón, and carefully crafted his image in order to create a mythology around him. Biographers and propagandists purposely exaggerated the melancholic appearance of the dictator concentrated in his people's destiny. In a particularly illustrative example of how the values of white

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<sup>75</sup> Arturo Taracena Arriola. "Miguel Ángel Asturias y la búsqueda del 'Alma Nacional' guatemalteca. Itinerario político 1920-1933", en *Miguel Ángel Asturias 1924-1933. Periodismo y creación literaria*, Amos Segala (coord.), CSIC Madrid, 1988, y Dante Liano. "Asturias y el pensamiento latinoamericano de los años veinte", en *Cultura de Guatemala*, Homenaje a Miguel Ángel Asturias 1899-1999, Año XIX, Vol. II.

supremacy were projected and reconciled in the Third World; Ubico was able to express his deep admiration for military technology, order, discipline, and racial superiority represented by the United States and by the Italian fascism and German Nazism at the same time.

The explicit admiration for all white and foreign helped the General to construct his own myth<sup>76</sup>, which included a special appreciation for foreign immigrants, particularly Germans, other Europeans and American landowners, businessmen, civil and military officers working for the regime, particularly those involved in accomplish Ubico's dreams like transforming the local Escuela Politécnica in a Guatemalan West Point (Karlen 1994). Although the United States was very effective tempering Ubico's sympathies for European fascism and his tolerance towards the widely extended pro-Nazi sentiment within the German community in Guatemala, the *vox populi* has kept alive the memory of Ubico greeting with the Nazi salute German troops that visited Guatemala in the late 1930s.

In a different interaction with the foreign sector, Ubico established public policies directed against the immigration of "yellow peoples" and "communist Mongols". Explicit provisions were erected against Asians trying to enter the country, and very often newspapers produced news and articles with racist stereotypes about Asians as was common in other Latin American countries. As part of the conservative and racist views of his dictatorship, a similar attitude was projected against black people, Afro-Guatemalans, and even Jews that were part of the local elite. A relevant aspect in Ubico's self-portrait as a superior man associated with the foreign sector, was his personal relation with United States' culture and technology. Before becoming a presidential candidate, he was in charge

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<sup>76</sup> Inspired by Mussolini and Hitler, examples, Ubico was honored by military parades during his annual journeys through cabeceras departamentales as can be read in Hernandez de Leon descriptions. 1941, tomo I, pp. 123, 152-153, 312, 349-350; 402, 404, 406, 408, 516, 517, 524, 529, 535, tomo II, 73, 416-417. V Grieb 1979: 203, 248-249.

of the eradication of *malaria* in the south coast; a program supported by the US government that credited him for his efficient work. He showed his mechanical skillfulness driving cars and motorcycles at high speed; hunting in El Peten<sup>77</sup>; sailing the most dangerous waters of the Guatemalan Atlantic Coast or just exhibiting his bravado virtues during his annual trips through the country. The General would have his gun and his Chesterfield displayed at the sight of collaborators and admirers that helped him to build the myth. Ubico was an active opponent of liberal arts, while he championed sports that required heavy equipment and limited knowledge. As part of his techno macho self-representation, Ubico used every possible opportunity to show his empirical abilities in a variety of technical matters, in order to prove that he was the most advanced version of the modern and civilized Guatemalan man. That strategy reinforced the aura of wisdom and virility that surrounded his figure, aggrandizing his image as a wealthy oligarch who did not need to steal from the public treasure to maintain his lifestyle.

The disciplined white man in uniform, used glasses that added an air of exceptional intelligence, admirable “retentiva”<sup>78</sup> and even occult powers, like the self attributed “double eye” that permitted him to identify at first sight, liars, communists and government’s political enemies<sup>79</sup>. These extraordinary qualities would come into play when the general was touring the country in an effort to keep track of every single issue that was related to his administration. During his public meetings in each of the selected towns, theoretically open for anyone who wanted to bring a complaint, demand justice, request public help, private counsel for personal matters or “just to greet the dictator”, Ubico directed his cruellest criticism against *indios aladinados*, stereotyped as rebellious,

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<sup>77</sup> Hernandez de Leon 1941, tomo I, p. 476

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p. 348

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. p. 77

treacherous, disloyal, dishonest and lazy; a group that was a potential source of political unrest and propagation of communist ideas. His attacks on *indios aladinados* were particularly harsh against *guizaches* or *tinterillos*, literate Indians that presented cases before him as representatives or people that did not know how to read and write. They were self-made indigenous intellectuals or *caciques ilustrados*, that by speaking on behalf of others inhibited the use of verbal “castellano”<sup>80</sup> They were opportunist agents that<sup>81</sup> in Ubico’s sociology, propagated laziness within indigenous communities, an attitude that together with vice was the surest road to crime and social disturbance. Ubico headed the combat against laziness as public policy during his four administrations in power, and in 1941, he proudly announced that “in the country there were only 2,000 *holgazanes*”<sup>82</sup>.

One of the main factors that characterized Ubico’s administration was the way the labor force was mobilized for plantations and public works. This strategy permitted the fast and organized growth of governmental and private infrastructure, and consequently the embellishment of cities and roads that internationally earned Guatemala City the label of “La Tacita de Plata”. That “Tacita de Plata” represented the culmination of Ubico’s ideals of cleanliness, whiteness, order and hygiene and made the US government officers, businessmen and even academics like Robert Redfield praise the achievements of Ubico’s dictatorship. He reinforced the militaristic character of school and the culture of vigilance and punishment, targeting small landholders, homeless, political prisoners and unemployed people to work for free in plantations and normalizing entertainment, use of leisure time, money collecting and mendicancy. Ubico created new legal frames that resulted in a more centralized control of labor for plantations and the institution of a *libretto*.

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<sup>80</sup> Hernandez de Leon 1941, t. I, p. 144 and 401.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. pp. 47-49; 54-55; 68, 71, 75, 157, 405, 411, 430, 460 and 461.

<sup>82</sup> “La energía marcial y la eficacia militar” permitieron que hacia 1941, la Gaceta de la Policía Nacional orgullosamente anunciara que en el país habían “solamente 2,000 holgazanes” (t. X, n. 44, p.1409)

For the convenience of landowners and *finqueros*, Ubico astutely praised the conception of *indigenousness* that portray “pure Indians” as models of docility, obedience, loyalty, honesty, punctuality, austerity and industriousness. Ubico was continuing the colonial tradition that through legal means pushed unemployed and poor Indians and mestizos into forced labor in public and private works. He abolished the old system of peonage debt that permitted the *habilitadores* to control indigenous labor<sup>83</sup>. But “para que el indio ya viéndose libre de obligaciones no volviera a incurrir en el peligroso delito de la vagancia”, wrote the prominent indigenista Carlos Antonio Girón Cerna (1941) Ubico created the *Ley de Vagancia* to punish a long list of deviants and citizens, among whom were non-wealthy peasants and people without land or a place to live. Laws to punish vagrancy were since colonial times a distinctive mark of Guatemalan economic and political history, but it was Ubico who used this in his favour to install a huge program of public works that still resonates in the current criminalization of impoverished Indians and popular Ladinos.

The best receptacle of images of how this criminalization operated is the official chronicle of Ubico’s trips through the country, published in two volumes titled *Viajes Presidenciales*, written by Federico Hernández de León (1941-1943). The power of that criminalization was extended to race, ideology and place of residence, creating a set of cultural markers that separated *gente decente* from *gente corriente*, as we will see later.

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 284 and 317

## ***Igualamiento and relations of servitude***

A very useful source to understand the relations of servitude and the relations between gente decente and gente corriente under Ubico's dictatorship is the *Semántica Guatemalense* of Lisandro Sandoval (1941). Although its main propose was to "corregir y depurar el lenguaje popular para liberarlo de vulgarismos e idiotismos que ofenden el buen gusto", the *Semantica* shows a rich collection of expressions that stigmatizes the illiterate, rural or urban "chusma", very often artisan or servant. Many of those expressions are the substance of a theory and practice of *igualamiento* that still inferiorizes the life styles of indigenous people and popular Ladinos in Guatemala. It is widely known for instance, that "tanto la gente pobre, como los indios y las tropas en marcha usaban caites, dando origen a verbos como caitearselas uno, es decir, huir o salir huyendo (148) o apelativos como caitudo que se refiere a los campesinos poco civilizados, que no se quitan los caites para transitar por la ciudad" (149).<sup>84</sup> Other markers of inferiority that distinguished ordinary people from "gente de razón are to utilize petates, hat, mecapal, rebozos<sup>85</sup>, to go shoeless, to eat in the ground without silverware, to participate in "zarabandas", "bailes de tacón de hueso"<sup>86</sup>, andar de "traje" o de "corte", hablar en "lengua" or to share the popular phantasmagoria about "espantos" or supernatural beings. For example "nacer arañando el petate", refers to "los indios de cierto pueblo (que) nacen ladrones por natural inclinación o instinto" (112); "Don Petate" is synonymous with "Don Nadie" ( 424); and "estar uno en el petate", denotes "haber perdido uno completamente su capital o su honor y demás

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<sup>84</sup> Caite is a "sandalia tosca de cuero, usada por la gente campesina muy pobre, y especialmente por los indígenas". Caite could be used as synonym of face, like in the example "si volvés a decir eso te trueno el caite" or in the expression that combines the double stereotype of humble and proud Indians: "si tuvieras caite no vendrías a humillarte" (Armas 1971:47) Caitazo is a name to express frustration or deception: "llevarse un caitazo".

<sup>85</sup> The "rebozo" as cultural marker of inferiority is evident for instance in the example "Lástima me da que la Anastasia sea de rebozo" (332)

<sup>86</sup> The inferiorization of rural life and the artifacts utilized by poor and peasant people, included also the inferiorization of their distractions a places of leisure time. For instance a "baile de tacón de hueso" is a "baile de mala muerte, al cual asisten personas de baja condición social; si bien los chanches gustan de concurrir a esta clase de reuniones" (103)

cualidades morales”(527). These features differentiate rural from urban people and not only Indians and non-Indians, contradicting simplistic approaches that reduce to the anti-Indian sentiment most of Guatemala’s discriminatory practices framed within the Indian-Ladino dichotomy. The theory and practice of *igualamiento* included in Sandoval’s *Semantica* was directed towards lower class individuals that crossed lines dressing in a way that was not considered proper for their social status; visiting public places that are frequented only by the upper classes; acquiring commodities that are expected to be part of the lifestyle of *decente* people; or to *hablar de vos* instead of *tu* and *usted*<sup>87</sup>. The unwritten norms against *igualamiento* configure the symbolic camp that defines the “lamido, liso, atrevido, grosero, desvergonzado, igualado” (9) by opposition to the *chancle, gente bien* and *decente*. These norms establish that it is mandatory “meterse uno con los de su igual” and “con los de su porte” (81) because “no hay que revolver el sebo con la manteca” (139). If somebody does not follow such recommendations, he or she exposes himself/herself to ridicule with sayings like “nosotros los músicos, dijo el indio que cargaba la marimba”, that highlights the assumption that Indians can not be musicians and will be always porters<sup>88</sup>.

One of the means to be recognized as an honorable and “decent” person was and still is for many upper and middle class Guatemalans, the practice of speaking the Spanish language “correctamente”, a requirement that includes the use of “tu” instead of “vos”, which is a “modo arcaico que denota gran vulgaridad”, accordingly to Antonio Batres

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<sup>87</sup> Although Sandoval did not include it the right to speak in Spanish language is other aspect where the critique of *igualamiento* is explicitly addressed as in the Rosario Castellanos example in Balun Canan: *Oílo vos, este indio igualado. Está hablando castilla. ¿Quién le daría permiso?*” p. 38 Or more recently the use of English language by lower class Ladinos and indigenous that live in United States or have studied abroad is criticized as another undesirable prove of “*igualamiento*”.

<sup>88</sup> Other cases criticize “*aladinamiento*” as a way of “*igualamiento*”, like in the example “*la Catalina desde que se aladinó, está tan presumida*” (Armas 1971:35) that alludes to the myth of “pure Indians” that are expected to be modest and obedient.

Jaúregui, quoted by Sandoval<sup>89</sup>. “El vos es la mancha negra del idioma castellano”, wrote Batres Jáuregui and “todos los vicios de nuestra lengua no son criollos, y en ciertos casos son más arcaicos que otra cosa. Hubo de estancarse el idioma, por falta de roce” (Batres Jáuregui 1904:105)<sup>90</sup>. The *falta de roce* invoked since colonial times as one of the main ways to civilize Indians and ladinos or to ladinoize Indians is applied here in a broader sense, showing how the *voseo* is a vulgar form in opposition to *tuteo*, which is a distinguished one that still marks class and caste borders between upper class Guatemalans and lower class Indians and plebeian Ladinos that live in urban places and in the countryside. In Guatemala, the *voseo*, “es un injustificado abuso, cuando no existe la suficiente confianza entre las personas que se comunican” (541). Many Ladinos still consider the *voseo* to be a treatment reserved for speaking down to “Indians” and it is common to hear the denigratory expression *vos los cochés* (“you the pigs” for *vos los indios*), to respond to any unexpected *voseo* that comes from somebody that is considered socially inferior.

Despite the efforts of Guatemala’s intellectual aristocracy to eliminate it as vulgar treatment used by vulgar people; the *voseo* persists. Nevertheless, it has never been

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<sup>89</sup> For Batres, “el hablar de vos de la plebe hispano-americana lo hereda de los soldados, frailes, mercaderes, y aun licenciados que de España venían, y que en aquellos rudos años así hablaban, diciendo en vez de vos habéis o vosotros habéis, vos habís por contracción, vos tenés por vos tenéis, sentáte en vez de sentaos, acostáte por acostaos, etc.” Batres Jáuregui, wrote that “En Guatemala, lo mismo que en Chile, en la Argentina y en otras repúblicas de la América española, se usa hablar de vos en vez de usted o de tú. Ese modo arcaico denota gran vulgaridad, y no ha de usarse del pronombre vos, en tal caso. Si se habla de una sola persona, debe decirse usted o tú, según el grado de familiaridad, y si con varias, ustedes o vosotros. Sólo en el estilo elevado, o dirigiéndose a Dios, se usa de ese pronombre vos; pero considerándolo siempre como plural, siendo un barbarismo grosero decir, como muchos dicen, vos sos o vos eres, en vez de vos sois o tu eres. Si se designa (p. 104) a la segunda persona con vos, o con os debe continuarse así en todo el discurso; pues no es lícito mezclar el vos, con el tú o usted, ni el tuyo con el vuestro. (...)”

<sup>90</sup> Batres Jáuregui call “idiotismos” to sayings that are part of the “habla popular” and categorize the vices of the America’s Castellano language in “Barbarismos, arcaísmos, neologismos, solecismos, cacofonías, repeticiones impropias, pleonasmos y galicismos”. Batres Jáuregui, Antonio. 1904. *El Castellano en América*. Guatemala, Imprenta de “La República”, 289 p. With his *Semántica Guatemalense*, Sandoval pretend to continue the work pioneered by Batres in his *Vicios del Lenguaje y Provincialismos de Guatemala*, published in 1892. Sandoval wants to echo Irisarri efforts to “corregir y depurar el lenguaje popular”, from “vulgarismos que ofenden el buen gusto ((p. XII,) due to the “carencia de centros destinados a conservar la pureza del lenguaje” (XII) and as part of the “higiene del espíritu” that affects particularly those “personas de poca cultura”.



appreciated as a linguistic treasure, and even less so, have been expressions considered to be *malas palabras*. On the contrary, there were campaigns to suppress it from public and private schools and from the media; preserving only colonial treatments like *Don* and *Doña* that are a colonial reminder of the role relations of servitude play in daily interactions<sup>91</sup>. However, the substitution of *vos* for *tu* is not an open option for all the actors that operate within the symbolic order that organizes Guatemala's socio-racial hierarchy. A Ladino housewife in her seventies that sees the use of *tu* as an undesirable way of *igualamiento* says that “ahora hasta el indito más ignorante trata de tu a su hijo”. Anybody who dare adopt a marker that according to the unwritten norms that defines the place of everyone in society runs the risk of stigmatization as *lamido*, *igualado* or in Sandoval's terms “chancle aguacatero”. This last term is a metaphoric expression that criticizes a person who choose to dress in a way that leaves him without financial means to feed himself with something other than avocados; the kind of food consumed by rural, poor people or artisans that are close or equal to the “gente del mercado”<sup>92</sup>. The real “chancle” is a “gente bien” and following Sandoval's Semántica, “el vulgo llama así a la persona que viste bien, que es rica o que pertenece a la alta sociedad”<sup>93</sup>.

A different version of the same expression is “chancletudo”: “nombre despectivo que el vulgo da a las personas calzadas y de buena posición social, y que, por esta circunstancia, visten bien y están siempre bien trajeadas”<sup>94</sup>. Illustratively “Gente” or “gente bien” is a “frase elíptica que se aplica a la persona bien nacida, elegante, importante,

<sup>91</sup> However, in recent years and as a part of a new national attitude some writers, journalists and publicists begun to promote some sort of public pride for the voseo and the Castellano dialectal spoken in Guatemala.

<sup>92</sup> In a subcategory inferior to the chancle aguacatero there is the carácter that in Chiapas is called “indio alzado”, very similar to the racist taxonomy that in modern Guatemala defines “shumos” and “choleros”.

<sup>93</sup> And the example that accompanies his definition reveals the class perceptions in social interactions: “En el baile de artesanos, también había chancles y chanclas, quienes fueron muy bien atendidos” (257).

<sup>94</sup> In a similar approach to the class prejudices that are part of the country's cultural modernity the example says: “En tiempos anteriores, los artesanos y la plebe en general manifestaban cierta antipatía por los chancletudos” (257).

rica, etc., o a la que presume serlo”(581) and in a similar way, “decente” is “la persona bien trajeada o bien vestida, aunque su conducta no corresponda al significado propio del adjetivo propuesto”<sup>95</sup>. (314) The opposite world of the “chancles” and “gente bien” is made up of mozos, artisans, “guanacos”, domestic servants or subordinates that were born with “comal” or “mancha mongólica” and in general all of those that “no han botado la cascara” which means “civilizarse uno, perder la rusticidad, adquirir las buenas costumbres y cultura que el roce social y el estudio dan a los aldeanos o poblanos que se establecen en la capital o asisten a los colegios” (Sandoval 1941:128)

Although these characterizations of *chancles* and plebeians in the Semantica Guatemalense belong to the 40s and 50s, most of its prejudiced inclination is still part of the elite’s theory of *igualamiento* and cultura finquera based on relations of servitude<sup>96</sup>.

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<sup>95</sup> A term that could be considered synonym of *chancle* and has similar ambiguities is *catrín*. “Petimetre. Dícese de la persona peripuesta, emperejilada”. (172) From the popular ladinos perspective, precariousness is a distinctive marker that place them in a cultural proximity to indigenous people. Precariousness as *modus vivendi* is related to a collection of sayings related to poverty and capitalist modernization like in the saying “no todos los días se come gallina”, or to “estar en la limpia concepción”, or in the rich collection of adjectives to name the person that is poor or poorly dressed.

<sup>96</sup> An story that exemplifies the symbolic war between “chancles” and plebeians in Guatemala’s Sandoval during the forties is the following case: Cierta día andaba de tuna un tipo de la clase baja del pueblo, de esos que la gente da en llamar baladrones, fanfarrones, quien dispuso entrar a una lujosa cantina (lo que no habría hecho en su estado normal), con objeto de seguir la chupa. Se puso de codos en el mostrador, con la espalda hacia los parroquianos que estaban en la sala donde a la sazón y en torno de una mesa, departían amigablemente unos tres o cuatro jóvenes, al parecer de la buena sociedad chapina, quienes tomaban su acostumbrado aperitivo para irse a almorzar a sus respectivos domicilios. Nuestro hombre, dirigiéndose al cantinero, “Sírrame un buen trago, así, grande”, le dijo en voz fuerte y un tanto destemplada; lo que alarmó a los jóvenes antes mencionados, porque conocieron lo alcoholizado que estaba y el grado que en la escala social ocupaba el que así hablaba. Teniendo éste en la izquierda el vaso de licor pedido, dirigió una mirada escudriñadora a su alrededor y, fijándola en las personas ya referidas, casi gritó: “Pues yo tanteyo que estos chancles, hijos de la zonta, no me alcanzan ni para precipiar” y acompañó lo expuesto al movimiento giratorio de un tacifiro, (cuchillo) que sacó de la bolsa de pecho y que blandió con la derecha. La prudencia aconsejó a los chancles no darse por aludidos, tanto por evitar un escándalo, como por no habérselas con un cualquiera y por no tener ninguno de todos revólver para defenderse al ser atacados. Seguidamente, bebiéndose el bravucón citado un segundo y un tercer trago, repitió por segunda vez: “Pues yo tanteyo que estos desgraciados chancles, hijos de...su madre, no me caben entre las patas y no me alcanzan ni para comenzar”. Naturalmente los chancles no hablaban, casi no respiraban, temerosos de que el energúmeno ese pusiera por obra sus inciviles provocaciones. Inopinadamente para los mencionados jóvenes, entró al salón un su camarada, quien, al verlos, se acercó a ellos para saludarlos, y se incorporó al corrillo, a tiempo de que nuestro matasiete vociferó: “Pues yo tanteyo que todos estos chancles puñeteros, hijos de la chingada, son unos pedazos de olote, unos pedazos de petate, que no me alcanzan ni para el prencípeo”; sin olvidarse de blandir el filoso tacifiro. Oído esto por el recién llegado, interrogó a sus compañeros sobre el particular, y al enterarse de lo que pasaba, los reconvino con estas o parecidas palabras: “Y ustedes, sangre de horchata, han tenido paciencia para soportar semejantes groserías? Yo tengo vergüenza y aunque estoy desarmado como ustedes, no las aguanto”. En efecto, ante el asombro de todos los circunstantes, se dirigió resueltamente a donde estaba el consabido guapetón: se le encaró y puesto en jarras, le dijo: “Oiga señor bravucón: yo soy chancle como todos estos sordomudos que tienen oídos de mercader: repita el insulto que nos acaba de proferir”. No bien había concluido el interpelado de reiterar su fraseología soez, cuando el interpelador le aplicó un tremendo soplamocos y una pata muy bien puesta; después de lo cual el agredido y susodicho perdonavidas in continenti dijo: “Pues tantíé mal”. Y se

The main axis of the semantic conjunct is the idea of Guatemala as a plantation and most of its class and racist stereotypes are directed not only to characterize the “plebe”, “pueblo bajo”, “gente inferior”, “populacho” or “chusma”<sup>97</sup> but to discipline the daily life of “mozos” working in “fincas” (291) and domestic servants that need to be kept in their place. It is remarkable how in the dominant mentality visible in Sandoval’s *Semántica*, most examples are always referred to lazy servants that are compared to animals. Like in the example that accompanies the definition of “cholla, cholludos. “Este criado se carga una cholla que pasma a cualquiera”. “Mi caballo y mi mozo son muy cholludos” (285). In another example, animals and persons are labour force that needs to be pushed as in the saying “indio comido al camino”, that “indica que las personas a quienes se provee convenientemente y oportunamente del alimento necesario, están siempre dispuestas a soportar la fatiga a que se les destine. También se aplica a los caballos, mulas y bueyes de trabajo”. That coercion to labor is also related with the saying “no aflojarle a uno el grito”, which means “apurar, apremiar, dar prisa a uno sin tregua para la ejecución de una cosa” (128). The “cholla”, “pereza”, “huevonería”, “avenimiento” or “haraganería” framed from the passive resistance to work it is also evident in expressions like “hacer lunes” por “no concurrir al trabajo el lunes, tanto artesanos, como peones y mozos, que han libado mucho licor el domingo”. “Estar de goma esas mismas personas el día lunes” (603). “Hacerse uno

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retiró muy tranquilamente, enfundando y guardando su fierro, agregando, mientras se alejaba, que pronto vendría por su vuelto; oyéndose entonces la protesta del cantinero, que afirmaba no haber recibido ni un centavo de tan indeseado cliente. La parroquia entera, con los nervios sublevados, había tratado de abandonar tumultuosamente aquel pacífico y honesto centro de distracciones, pensando en la sangre que correría con motivo de la inexperiencia del fogoso joven, quien, pasado el peligro, fue objeto de felicitaciones del culto público allí reunido, una vez repuesto del sustazo que había tenido. (479-80-81). Even the insults are considered markers that reveal the person’s social origins. In a brief story titled “Insultar pero con finura” the author tells how a “solemne señor” that is walking around a corner, unwillingly hits “una mujer de canasto” and after “esta lo llena de improperios a lo cual el fulano responde, -Y por qué no va usted a decirle todas esas insolencias a su muy distinguida progenitora (su madre)?” (465)

<sup>97</sup> The same “chusma” or the modern “shumos” and “choleros” that accordingly to a White Guatemalan from Creole and French ascendance provoked that in the “zona 10” “todo se haya puesto muy feo”. That association between the plebeian presence and the ugliness reinforces the criminalization of the dark plebeian and has been a sociological practice that converts the young ladino casta in delinquent only because of his skin color, attire, hair style, place of residence or food or musical preferences, as we will see later.

la brocha, hacerse uno brea, hacerse uno el baboso, hacerse la bestia, hacerse el papo, hacerse uno el sapo, hacerse uno el peje, hacerse uno el zunto, hacerse uno la chanchita muerta, hacer uno la suaca, hacer uno la planta, hacer uno la tela, hacer uno la vieja, hacerse uno el sueco”. “Tengo algunos mozos que solo hacen la suaca y que no trabajan”. These expressions denounce laziness from the perspective of landlords and masters and are also directed against Indian mozos and Ladino workers, like in the saying that stigmatizes Moors and Indígenas “por igual” like in “hacer uno la de los moros” utilized “cuando a última hora queda uno mal, contra su deseo y contra lo que venía preparando”<sup>98</sup>.

The stereotypical combination of being Indian, drunk and irresponsible plays a double game to ridicule Indians and mimic the lack of seriousness in agreement with the cheerful attitude of “nuestros indios” shared by Ladinos during religious festivals. Another relevant symbolic aspect in this example is the possessive *nuestros* that reminds the *encomendero* tradition still active in Guatemala that allude to indigenous people as if they were private or public property. That colonial objectification of the indigenous self is illustrated by the colonialist premise, that assumes “that natives, all of them, they are the same”. In that respect it does not matter the individual qualities of the singular person, beginning with their name. All women are “Marías” and all men can be called “Chepe”, “José”, “Juan” or “Pedro”. “Cuando el indio comerciante regatea el precio de un artículo, el empleado o vendedor le contesta: “No se puede, Chepe” (266). The radical suppression of the indigenous personal individuality is also combined with the right to insult “Indians” in the most unusual and unexpected situations, where whites and Ladinos crudely reiterate the idea that they are not Indians and project a racist construction of an indigenous self like

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<sup>98</sup> Esta expresión alude a que en las fiestas de los pueblos indígenas se celebra, desde la época del coloniaje, el drama de “Moros y cristianos”, representado por nuestros indios, quienes hacen bien los ensayos anticipadamente; pero resulta que el día de la representación quedan muy mal, debido a que se embriagan desde la víspera”. (617)

in the expression of “agua de brasas”: “Cuando en una fiesta se le sale el indio a algún invitado, las mismas señoras claman por una tacita de agua de brasas para que se les pase el susto” (Sandoval 1941:24).

Those denigrating treatments are particularly offensive when they target people like female workers or servants and their children, who for gender, cultural and economic factors are situated at the bottom of the socioracial hierarchy. Being “mujer de canasto”, “mujer del mercado” or “hijo de la tortillera”, “la cocinera” or “la atolera” are some of the worst qualities from the elitist perspective of society. The inferiorization is especially notable in the case of “choleras” and their children, the “patojos”. Children of poor women, especially if they are Indians are “patojos” or “ixtos”. Although most female servants in Guatemala’s history have been “Indians”, there is also evidence that this is one of the spaces where intercultural relations from below, exhibit ambiguous particularities where class and cultural prejudices reunites the anti-Indian sentiment with the denigration of mestizaje indígena and lower class ladinos. “Choleras” for instance is the “nombre que se da a las criadas de baja ralea o condición, que tienen modales inciviles o poco cultos. También se aplica, por extensión, a las mujeres, que si bien son sirvientas, se distinguen o singularizan por su mala educación” (285) The “cholera” is the receptacle of vilifications, a woman in a situation of semi-slavery at the mercy of her masters<sup>99</sup>. Besides the “cholera” is the “cuque” “o el que antes se llamaba mechudo, el hombre vulgar que se acicala mucho, para caer bien a las choleras”. (72) “Cuques” and “choleras” are prominent protagonists of how life in fincas, garrisons and houses cemented the structure of Guatemala’s retrogressive modernity. In the taxonomy of relations of servitude there are different

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<sup>99</sup> The additional right to have sexual access to the servant’s body it is very often included and there are many homes where the sexual initiation of young males occurs as part of the subjugation of the female servant. A denigrating expression associated to this fact is “desenvolver un tamal” which means “tener acto carnal el ladino o extranjero con una india envuelta o india refajada” (1941:345).

categories of “choleras” and servants, for instance “nana” is the servant that is elder, “criada de adentro” works in housework, “criada de rebozo” is more or less India, china is the “niñera”<sup>100</sup>, and chichigua is the “nodriza”. Next to the “sirvientas” are their children, or the “patojos”, “ixtos” or “chirises”. “Patojo de la calle”, for instance, says Sandoval, is a “nombre que se da a los muchachos del pueblo o humildes, mal vestidos y peor educados, generalmente descalzos, casi abandonados de sus padres. Se les llama así, porque recorren las calles haciendo diabluras. Estos patojos muchas veces son hijos de choleras, vocablo que es una variación de pozolera y del cual podría considerarse como aféresis” (213).

Choleras’ children eventually would be working for their mother’s employers but when they are still babies, they are targeted as an inconvenience. Very often “gente decente” would explicitly request “sirvienta pero sin hijos”. The “patojo es chipe es decir el niño jirimiquiento que se la pasa chipilineando”. “Ya no aguantamos al patojo de la cocinera; porque chipilinea que es gusto”<sup>101</sup> (277). When they grow up, these children eventually become “hijos” o “hijas de casa” being Indians or Ladinos<sup>102</sup> (631). That kind of philanthropic slavery has its defendants and as part of the unspoken racist and class assumptions about it, there are contradictory opinions about the advantages or

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<sup>100</sup> As intercultural space from below “el oficio de china fue desempeñado, originariamente por nuestras indias, casi siempre de Mixco, San Juan Sacatepéquez y otros pueblos circunvecinos de la Capital; pero hoy en día también las mujeres ladinas ejercen ese empleo familiar o doméstico”(274)

<sup>101</sup> Patojos were called also “los muchachos del pueblo o humildes, descalzos, nigüentos, que cojeaban al andar y que se les veía vagando por las calles. Después, al reprender los padres a sus hijos, los comparaban con aquellos muchachos y decían, por ejemplo: “Ya no te quiero, hijo, porque en lo mal portado te pareces al patojo de la cocinera”. Posteriorlly it became synonym with “hijo, hija, niño, niña; y así se decía como se dice hoy “Mis cinco patojos asisten puntualmente al colegio”, “Dos de mis patojas están con sarampión”, etc. En el libro *Vicios del Lenguaje y Provincialismos de Guatemala*, por el licenciado don Antonio Batres Jáuregui, se lee al respecto:Patojo. A los muchachos o chiquillos del pueblo llaman por acá patojos, acaso porque, llevando los pies descalzos, tuvieran alguna dificultad para andar; puesto que ese adjetivo designa en castellano al que tiene las piernas torcidas o los pies mal hechos, o ambas cosas desproporcionadas, e imita al pato en el andar, meneando el cuerpo de un lado a otro”. (212)

<sup>102</sup>Hija de casa says Sandoval is a “patoja o niña que uno recibe como sirvienta sin sueldo, pero a quien se le proporciona vestido, calzado, ropa de toda clase y hasta instrucción. Se le llama también hija de crianza“Hija de casa” is a “patoja o niña que uno recibe como sirvienta sin sueldo, pero a quien se le proporciona vestido, calzado, ropa de toda clase y hasta instrucción. Another acception for the term niña is from the other side because is a “tratamiento que la servidumbre y también la gente de clase inferior, dan a las hijas de los amos y patronos. Los mismos amos autorizan este uso. “La niña Mariita no quiere levantarse”. In a similar way, Niño is the “tratamiento que la plebe da a los hombres de cierta distinción social, considerados por aquella como sus superiores”. (125)

disadvantages of having as servant, a “pure Indian”, a Ladina or an “india aladinada”<sup>103</sup>.

From a socio-anthropological perspective, the *Semantica Guatemalense* contents some of the more appreciated representations about the lazy native, the criminalization of people and the dominant ideas about the place that everyone has to occupy in society.

## Conclusions

As we have seen in this chapter, the bipolar division of Guatemala’s colonial society into the *Republica de Indios* and the *Republica de Espanoles* created conceptions of indigenusness and non-indigenusness that were fundamental for the reproduction of the labor system and the dissemination of representations that normalized servile relations. Indians were constructed as agricultural workers and docile servants and their resistance against colonial subjugation included process of Ladinoization from below, that contributed to the demographic growth of mestizo population. The legal and political invisibilization of mestizos did not stop mestizaje as cultural and biological process, and the bipolar division in two republics supported the construction of indigenusness and non-indigenusness and the Ladinos’ self depiction as non-Indians. During colonial and modern times, *indios aladinados* as well as popular Ladinos were equally stigmatized as an inferior kind of people who could only be redeemed through an iron fist and forced labor. In order to contain Indian insurgency and discipline the workforce for the plantation economy, capitalist modernization in Guatemala maintained the indigenous-non-indigenous division.

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<sup>103</sup> Doña T. M. for instance, assuming that if her Indian servant did not speak Spanish was going to be more obedient and sumise, “se trajo de Solola”, as if the woman were a commodity buyable at the “mercado”, but the first day they arrived to the capital, the cakchiquel woman was so stressed and traumatized by the fact of abandoning her village that she hanged herself at her bedroom. Next day Doña T.M. was angry not because of the unexpected tragedy but because the police was coming to her home to get information about what happened with the “cholera”. Not to mention that Doña T.M.’s mother who died at 94, most of her long life have as perpetual companion an Indian servant that aged together and became the “comadre” and took care of her for more than 85 years.

However, this process of modernization was regressive. While it integrated Indians and Ladinos into export agriculture as cheap labor, it did not grant them political rights, as would be expected in a context in which consumerism accompanies the development of citizenship within liberal democracy.

During most of Guatemala's republican history, the imprisonment and forced labor in private and public works has been celebrated with civic enthusiasm by writers, religious leaders and social representatives that justified the existence of those policies directed to punish the lazy and the vagrant. That inculcation was gradually ingrained in all social levels and cultures, producing representations of laziness and industriousness that are still hegemonic. Guatemalan legislators claimed for eugenics, foreign immigration and improved State control to push indigenous people to work in plantations.<sup>104</sup> The main problem of the country, wrote a columnist, could be summarized in three words, "brazos, brazos y mas brazos", meaning more Indian labor for plantations<sup>105</sup>.

The introduction of technological changes required by economic modernization and the symbolic power of white immigrants, consolidated in the dominant mentality the superior status of a minority with possibilities to travel abroad and access to industrialized goods from Europe and United States. The prestige associated with technology, aesthetic models, values and manners of social behavior that were considered elegant and civilized, created a new subjectivity that accomplished the double goal of tracing social class

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<sup>104</sup> Sobre el trabajo indígena y el café, ver Julio C. Cambranes. *Café y campesinos en Guatemala, 1853-1897*, Editorial Universitaria, Guatemala, 1985; y David McCreery. "Coffee and Class: The Structure of Development in Liberal Guatemala", en *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 56(3), 1976, pp. 438-460; "Debt Servitude in Rural Guatemala 1876-1936", en *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 63(4), 1983, pp. 735-759; "An Odious Feudalism: Mandamiento Labor and Commercial Agriculture in Guatemala 1858-1920", en *Latin American Perspectives*, 48(1), 1986, pp. 99-117; y *Rural Guatemala*, Stanford University Press, California, 1994.

<sup>105</sup> En tiempos mas recientes, el 21 de septiembre de 1984, el gobierno de facto del general Oscar Mejía Víctores firmó las Normas reglamentarias para la aplicacion del convenio internacional del trabajo relativo a la abolicion del trabajo forzoso. "Se precisan los alcances del concepto de vagancia en el sentido de que este se refiere a quienes se abstengan habitualmente de trabajar, perturben el orden publico y carezcan de medios licitos de subsistencia". Ver. Tania Sagastume Paiz. "La compulsion al trabajo: Analisis de la legislacion sobre la vagancia en la ciudad de Guatemala 1751-1863. Coloquio Internacional "Universos Coloniales Centroamericanos". URL, Guatemala, 29 de octubre de 2003.



boundaries and cultural frontiers between “gente decente” and “gente corriente”.

Popular Ladinos explicitly adopted the unwritten rules of whiteness and prejudices that denied the influence of *mestizaje indigena* and established *the place of everyone in society*. These rules condemned *igualamiento* and praised the virtues of racial and cultural *purity*. However, the economic, political and cultural expansion of United States in Latin America and the defeat of European fascism and Nazism, in coincidence with the rising of revolutionary nationalism in Guatemala, opened up the opportunity for modernizing efforts to achieve the historical task of transforming Indians into consumers and middle- class Ladinos.

Although general Ubico’s regime have signed the Acta de Patzcuaro in 1940, marking the official birth of Pan-American indigenismo sponsored by United States, the Guatemalan dictatorship did not consider it important to implement institutional actions to promote an indigenous and mestizo pride that would develop a popular sense of national unity. While Mexico founded a Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia that provided anthropologists for State programs addressed to indigenous people, Ubico considered that there was no *problema indígena* in Guatemala because Indian men were learning how to read and write in the army’s garrisons and instead of *integration*; separation between Indians and Ladinos was much more convenient for the country’s economic and political health.

After Ubico’s dictatorship, the process of political democratization and national building in Guatemala entered its most modern version during the XX century with the indigenista program promoted by Juan Jose Arevalo (1945-1950) and the agrarian reform of Jacobo Arbenz (1950-1954). During the Revolution of 1944-1954 the dynamics of race and culture were reframed by a new agenda that attempted to transform Guatemala in a

modern country and a “homogeneous nation”. The revolutionary nationalism abolished Ubico’s law against vagrancy and substituted it with a new one that basically conserved the first items, which normalized the use of leisure time and penalized small landholders “that do not produce”, peasants “that do not work”, and people that lack “licit means of life”<sup>106</sup>. Anthropology was called on to play a relevant role in the new modernizing program to solve the contradictions of preserving the culture and customs of the indigenous people and incorporating them to market and citizenship. That modernizing agenda naturalized “culture change” that in many ways was used as a euphemism to justify capitalist modernization. In the big picture, the conversion of indigenous people in Ladinos anticipated by anthropologists, coincided with John Gillin claims about the existence of a *Mestizo America* that was very receptive to Western influences and deserved to be treated at the same level of the great civilizations around the world (1947, 1949 and 1955). Gillin’s anticipation never crystallized in an ample recognition of America as a Mestizo continent, neither strong commercial and political links between United States and Latin America were developed as expected. On the contrary, anti-communism interrupted processes of revolutionary nationalism in Guatemala, and reinforced old prejudices and values that supported white supremacy and the denigration of all non-whites, especially of those who were poor and illiterate.

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<sup>106</sup> The controversy originated during Arevalo’s government had to do not with the text of law but with its application. And apparently the official explanation of the government was that there were not laborers for plantations because many of them emigrated to Mexico as result of Ubico’s Ley de Vialidad and argued that had to be the municipal governments the ones on charge to apply the law. The Constitution kept in its article 55 the expressed fact that vagrancy was punishable.

## Chapter II

### The “Indian problem” and the Middle Class Mestizo

"Desde el momento en que el indio es factor importante en nuestra producción pero casi nulo en cuanto a nuestro consumo, es evidente que existe en ello un notable desequilibrio. No han pensado los grandes financieros en el enorme mercado que pueden representar treinta millones de indios y otros tantos millones de mestizos trabajadores que hoy apenas consumen parte de lo que ellos mismos producen, sin consumir casi nada de la gran producción industrial de América".

Carlos Antonio Girón Cerna,  
Secretario Ejecutivo del Instituto Indigenista Interamericano (1942)

In this chapter, I examine the relationship between the revolutionary nationalism of Juan José Arévalo (1945-1950) and Jacobo Arbenz (1950-1954), and the Panamerican indigenismo as established in the Acta de Pátzcuaro (1940), paying particular attention to the effort to “solve the Indian problem” by transforming Indians and Afro descendants into Mestizo middle-class consumers. Next, I analyze the operation of the Instituto Indigenista Nacional (IIN) and its effort to promote the “formación de la nacionalidad” (Redfield 1945) and the role of applied anthropology in promoting “cultural change” as a vehicle of modernization and development.

I also review the contributions of US experts and academics, such as Robert Redfield, Sol Tax, William J. Griffith, Mark Hanna Watkins, Norman McQuon, Benjamin Paul, Richard N. Adams and Harry McArthur who organized and executed some of the most important indigenista programs. In the context of the post-1954 anti-imperialism, I consider it relevant to emphasize the relationships between US and Guatemalan anthropologists and officials and how they were marked by an open communication up until the CIA intervention that removed Col. Jacobo Arbenz from power in 1954. I analyze how the Panamerican indigenismo project of transforming Indians and Afro descendants

into middle- class mestizos, expanded the mobilizing power of Whiteness and Anti-communism and consequently the prestige of being “canche”, blanco and “pistudo”.

### **The homogeneous nation and social integration**<sup>107</sup>

In December 1941, a Grupo Indigenista<sup>108</sup> was founded in Guatemala by Ladino and Creole writers and aficionado researchers<sup>109</sup> interested in solving the “Indian problem”

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<sup>107</sup> En 1940 luego de la firma del Acta en Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, se organizó el comité ejecutivo provisional del Instituto Indigenista Interamericano con Luis Chávez Orozco como presidente; el guatemalteco Carlos Antonio Girón Cerna, secretario general y Moisés Sáenz, muerto al año siguiente en Perú, director. Ellos formularon la Convención que dió estructura orgánica al III. En su calidad de secretario, Girón Cerna asumió brevemente la dirección del III a la muerte de Sáenz y se encargó de coordinar el Boletín Indigenista, publicación trimestral del Instituto. Girón abandonó ambos cargos cuando en marzo de 1942 fue designado director del III, Manuel Gamio. Girón Cerna trabajó desde un principio en la organización del Instituto Indigenista Interamericano (III) fue secretario ejecutivo, fundador y primer director de la revista *América Indígena* y del *Boletín Indigenista*. En Pátzcuaro fue designado presidente de la Sección Jurídica y secretario técnico en todo el evento. Delegado al Primer Congreso Demográfico que tuvo lugar en México en 1943. Ese mismo año la Secretaría de Gobernación le publicó su ensayo “La Nueva Paz del Indio”. Como dramaturgo escribió las obras *Ixquic*, *Tututícutu* y *Quiché-Achí*; la primera estrenada en La Habana en 1933; la última traducida al inglés y seleccionada por la UNESCO para ser presentada en una muestra organizada en marzo de 1950 por la universidad de Pensilvania. Fue nombrado agregado cultural de la embajada de Guatemala en México en 1952, durante la administración del coronel Jacobo Arbenz (1951-1954). Otros guatemaltecos además de Girón tuvieron participación en la primera etapa del proyecto indigenista. Carlos Mérida, maestro eminente de la plástica mundial, creó el emblema que hasta la fecha identifica al III Mérida “famoso por la recia personalidad de sus obras en la nueva escuela de pintores americanos”, decía la nota escrita en 1952, creó el emblema que consta de tres cabezas “representativas del hombre autóctono del Continente, en tres de las más importantes etapas de su evolución histórica” la primitiva, la de la conquista y la del indigenismo. “Esta especie de trilogía de las tres cabezas esta basado en la formulación poética y sensible del intelectual, también guatemalteco, Ing. Carlos Girón Cerna, autor del “Poema de las tres cabezas”. Este emblema apareció publicado por primera vez en el primer número del volumen 11 de *América Indígena* a principios de 1942. “Difusión de nuestro emblema” en BI, v. XII, n. 1-4, 1952, p. 282. Cuando el régimen guatemalteco aun no firmaba la Convención, David Vela, abogado y periodista del vespertino *El Imparcial*, fue nombrado miembro del Comité Ejecutivo del Instituto en 1942.

<sup>108</sup> La iniciativa institucional mas importante que precedió a la formación del Primer Grupo Indigenista en Guatemala en 1941, fue la fundación de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala (SGHG), el 15 de mayo de 1923 siendo presidente de la república el general José María Orellana. Entre sus miembros fundadores se contaron Antonio Batres Jauregui, Adrián Recinos, Virgilio Rodríguez Beteta y José Antonio Villacorta Calderón. A partir de entonces, la Sociedad se convirtió en el principal enlace de los estudiosos nacionales con la comunidad científica del exterior. La SGHG apoyó y facilitó el trabajo de diversas instituciones extranjeras, especialmente de la Institución Carnegie que a pocos años de su creación en 1902, mandó su primera expedición a Guatemala y luego de explorar y excavar distintos sitios arqueológicos en Yucatán, Guatemala, Belice, Honduras y El Salvador, instaló una oficina en la capital guatemalteca y dos centros de investigación, uno en Chichén Itzá y otro en Uaxactún. Se investigó la flora, fauna y geología y se elaboró un mapa del departamento de El Peten, al norte de Guatemala.

<sup>109</sup> La mesa directiva del grupo quedó integrada de la siguiente forma; Vela como director coordinador asistido por dos secretarios: Alfonso Orantes y el entonces bachiller Manuel Galich. Siete diferentes secciones presididas por un director a quien apoyarían tres vocales y un secretario. Los encargados de estas secciones, que en los años futuros se dedicarían a otras tareas o algunos que retornarían al quehacer indigenista fueron los siguientes: Jorge Luis Arriola, para la Educativa; Mario Monteforte Toledo para la Economía y Estadística; Epaminondas Quintana para la Biológica; José Castañeda para la Artística; Flavio Herrera para la Jurídica; Flavio Rodas para la Lingüística y José Joaquín Pardo para la sección Bibliográfica, de Información y propaganda. David Vela, director del Grupo comentó en “*El Imparcial*”: (En Lima y en Pátzcuaro) “se sugirió que mientras se crea el Instituto Nacional Indigenista, al tenor del artículo 10 de la Convención, los intelectuales interesados en esos problemas trabajen en correspondencia con el Instituto Indigenista Interamericano, haciendo ambiente a la idea indigenista y emprendiendo los estudios y labores de más urgente realización en nuestro medio” Tres meses más tarde, en marzo de 1942, Vela realizó una gira de tres meses por los Estados Unidos que incluyó conversaciones con John Collier, director del Indigenista norteamericano y residente del Consejo Directivo del III, y

through the foundation of an “instituto indigenista”, based on the guidelines established in the Acta de Pátzcuaro<sup>110</sup>. The “razones”<sup>111</sup> and “fines”<sup>112</sup> of this Grupo Indigenista were

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visitas a las reservaciones indígenas. Se entrevistó con personeros del III durante una breve estancia en México, a su regreso a Guatemala.

<sup>110</sup> El Acta de Pátzcuaro recomendó que se “conceptuó al indio como económica y socialmente débil” y “se respeten y aprovechen los elementos positivos de las instituciones tradicionales de los indios sin llegar al extremo de utilizarlas como gobierno indirecto” (Girón 1945:69). Se exhortó a retomar aspectos de la organización comunal que fortificaran “la disciplina social” indispensable para coordinar la aspiración común de grupo con las aspiraciones nacionales de cada país. De la misma manera se consideró pertinente tomar “medidas para aprovechar el tiempo desocupado de los indios dedicados a la agricultura” y “cuando sea posible”, llevarlos a la industria. Los programas “en favor del bienestar del indio” utilizarán según se dijo “las enseñanzas de la antropología aplicada y en esa misma dirección el Instituto deberá promover “el establecimiento de escuelas o departamentos de antropología para el estudio de la población indígena y para la preparación de peritos en asuntos indígenas”. Además, se recomendó estudiar la influencia de las razas y costumbres indígenas en la patología regional (Ibid.:70). Estos fueron algunos de los principios indigenistas fundamentales pero sin embargo su el espíritu civilizatorio no satisfizo a Girón Cerna que reaccionó: “Con un espíritu de crítica sana, señaló quien fuera secretario general y primer director interino del III, podríamos decir que sintetizado, así, el programa de estudios sobre el indio recomendado en Pátzcuaro, resulta pobre y lleno de lagunas”. Según Girón “es necesario estudiar al indio en una forma integral que abarque toda su historia enfocada desde todos los ángulos: económico, social, artístico, cultural, mitológico, filosófico, legendario, arqueológico, etnológico, etcétera. El indio se merece una gran enciclopedia trilingüe de lineamiento general histórico” (...) basada en un “sistema de monografías agrupadas en secciones para facilitar los estudios comparativos y cubrir las insuficiencias de los Handbook de Norte y Sur América preparados por la Institución Smithsonian.” (Ibid.) La estrategia indigenista panamericana tuvo como uno de sus principales objetivos, centralizar y coordinar toda la teoría indigenista y extraer de ella las leyes-tipo aplicables a nivel general, a fin de lograr unidad jurídica ante el problema indígena. Se consideró necesario en una primera etapa, establecer Institutos Indigenistas Nacionales de cada país, para centralizar y coordinar toda la teoría indigenista y en una segunda etapa, extraer de ella las leyes tipo aplicables en general con el fin de unificar la legislación en torno al indígena. Para preparar esta etapa legislativa, los congresos indigenistas deberían someter a los gobiernos, las conclusiones y recomendaciones resultado de estudios detenidos basados en datos estadísticos. Vendría enseguida una etapa ejecutiva en la cual cada gobierno debería implementar acciones específicas. En cada país donde exista población indígena se creará una agencia, departamento, o secretaría de Estado que se encargue de orientar y encauzar a los problemas del indio todos los recursos pertinentes del Gobierno. En esta etapa ejecutiva son indispensables cursos de especialización para personal de preferencia indígena con el objetivo de formar con ellos brigadas de incorporación integral “con lo cual se logrará vencer la natural desconfianza de los indios en contra de los modos civilizadores del blanco” (Ibid.:79) De esa manera, los institutos indigenistas nacionales cumplirían funciones de investigación, información y consulta en cooperación con el III y luego, en una segunda etapa, los gobiernos se encargarían de materializar los acuerdos aprobados en los Congresos indigenistas.

<sup>111</sup> Entre sus razones se establecía que “el progreso de la nación entera” depende “del mejoramiento de las condiciones en que vive la masa indígena”. “Guatemala, decía el documento, tiene el compromiso moral de estudiar y resolver los problemas que atañen al indígena” por virtud del acuerdo tomado al respecto en las VII y VIII Conferencias Internacionales Interamericanas y por haber suscrito igualmente las resoluciones y recomendaciones del Congreso de Pátzcuaro. “Aunque se abriga la esperanza de que en breve fecha ratificará el gobierno de Guatemala, la Convención que crea el Instituto Indigenista Interamericano, y conforme al artículo X de dicha convención, fundará un Instituto Indigenista Nacional, es conveniente y patriótico anticipar los trabajos encomendados a esos organismos, a la par que se labore por el establecimiento de estos mismos”. Otra de las razones fue “formar conciencia nacional en favor de la idea indigenista”, realizar estudios “serios y realistas sobre la situación de los indígenas” y divulgar “el carácter y la importancia de dichos problemas a efecto de atraer la atención y la cooperación de todos los guatemaltecos hacia las soluciones adecuadas y suficientes”. Finalmente, se insistió en que “...el deber de iniciar y orientar esa tarea es un cometido moral para todos los intelectuales guatemaltecos y muy particularmente para quienes en algún modo se relacionan por razones vocacionales, por la índole de sus estudios o por virtud de las actividades que desarrollan en el seno de nuestra sociedad, con alguno o algunos de los diversos problemas del indio”.

<sup>112</sup> Entre los fines de este Grupo se mencionaron:

1. “Colectar, ordenar, analizar y resumir los estudios, experiencias y prácticas subsistentes que en nuestro país tengan o hayan tenido el valor de antecedentes de la campaña indigenista”.
2. Interesarse en el estudio y reforma de la legislación existente para mejorar la condición jurídica del indio.
3. “Promover y fomentar los estudios etnográficos para tratar de que se conserven las costumbres e ideas actualmente útiles entre los grupos indígenas y de que se modifiquen o sustituyan cuantas se opongan a su normal evolución económica y cultural”.
4. “Trabajar porque las artes populares de los indígenas mantengan su tradicional valor estético, sin perjuicio de mejorar las condiciones de producción y aumentar su rendimiento, por cuantos medios técnicos y medidas legislativas

aimed at “formular las bases de un programa indigenista y para trabajar hasta lograr la plena participación de Guatemala en el programa del Instituto Indigenista Interamericano”<sup>113</sup>.

Although General Ubico denied there was an “Indian problem” in Guatemala<sup>114</sup>, in 1936 he offered his support to the Carnegie Institution (Carrillo 1937:171, Girard 1943:109) to conduct research on Indian languages and the weaving industry in the Guatemalan highlands, as well as the social organization of Chichicastenango, El Quiché and the region around the Atitlán Lake in Sololá (ibid.:177)<sup>115</sup>.

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convenientes puedan emplearse. Esto incluye auspiciar la creación y mantenimiento de museos locales o regionales y escuelas de arte indígena, la apertura de mercados y gestión de franquicias aduaneras”.

5. Promover estudios sobre alimentación, trabajo, habitación y sanidad de los grupos indígenas.
6. “Estudiar los problemas de la educación del indio”, en especial preparar maestros que sean bilingües para que regresen a sus pueblos a enseñar.
7. “Mantener contacto con las instituciones dedicadas a estudios o a la acción indigenista, y un nexo más estrecho de cooperación con el Instituto Indigenista Interamericano”. Y
8. “Hacer las gestiones pertinentes para que Guatemala ratifique la Convención del III y oportunamente se cree el Instituto Indigenista de Guatemala.

<sup>113</sup> La fuente para todas las citas relativas a la fundación del primer grupo Indigenista, sus razones y sus fines fueron tomadas de “Institutos Indigenistas Nacionales”, BI, v. II, no. 1, marzo de 1942, pp. 7-9. Este boletín trae en prime plana una fotografía con “Indígenas de Guatemala”, tejedores de San Juan Sacatepéquez, según se observa. Para esta fecha era evidente que Guatemala empezaba a recibir atención especial de parte de los indigenistas norteamericanos. Emil J. Sady, miembro del III fue comisionado por el Comité Ejecutivo para visitar Guatemala el mismo mes de diciembre de 1941. David Vela se encargó de coordinar las labores de su estancia. Sady, comisionado del Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas de los Estados Unidos, regresó precipitadamente a su país “por exigencias de la guerra” (BI, v. II, n- 4, diciembre de 1942). Su esposa Rachel Reese de Sady, a petición de Redfield y Tax, efectuó un estudio de los archivos oficiales mexicanos “desde el punto de vista de su valor para la investigador de comunidades indígenas” (BI, v. II, n.2, junio de 1942)

<sup>114</sup> Los Comités Ejecutivo y Directivo del Instituto Indigenista Interamericano (III), la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala (SGHG), la Institución Carnegie de Washington, el Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas de los Estados Unidos y la Universidad de Chicago y otras instituciones y personas, apremiaron al general Ubico (1931-1944) para que ratificara la Convención que apoyaba la creación del III y de sus filiales en cada país del continente. El gobierno ubiquista no firmó la Convención, argumentando que en Guatemala no existía “problema indígena” ya que este se había resuelto por medio de leyes y decretos y en lo educativo, la alfabetización estaba realizándose en los cuarteles “...la situación del indio guatemalteco no reviste las proporciones ni las características de un problema”, aseguraba un documento oficial presentado por las autoridades ubiquistas en una reunión de ministros de Educación Pública del istmo realizada en Panamá, en 1943, Ministerio de Educación Pública (1943). V. Valenzuela de Garay (1982)

<sup>115</sup> Estos trabajos se realizaron bajo la dirección de Robert Redfield y Solomon Tax de la Universidad de Chicago y constituyen el inicio de los estudios de comunidad en Guatemala que posteriormente influyeron en el surgimiento de la moderna antropología en los Estados Unidos. Según Carmack (1973) el comienzo de los estudios de comunidad fue un reflejo de la tendencia general de la antropología que se alejó de la historia cultural y se acercó al funcionalismo. Los trabajos de investigación de Chicago y Carnegie en México y Guatemala tomaron una forma definida a partir de la discusión conjunta que Ralph Beals, Robert Redfield y Solomon Tax tuvieron en 1942 y que fue publicada en 1943. Posteriormente, una reunión celebrada en Nueva York en 1949, que congregó a los investigadores más importantes de la época que trabajaban en Mesoamérica, decidió evaluar las estrategias de investigación formuladas siete años antes. De esta reunión salió un libro editado por Tax (1952) cuyos planteamientos metodológicos orientaron el trabajo de generaciones de investigadores durante las décadas siguientes, cfr. Zamora (1987:343)

During 1942, Manuel Gamio became director of the Instituto Indigenista Interamericano (III)<sup>116</sup> and several academic events helped to solidify the basic principles of applied anthropology in the hemisphere<sup>117</sup>. Continuing his previous approaches to applied science and indigenismo, Gamio was particularly interested in Central American history and culture<sup>118</sup>. And at his suggestions, the III recommended the following topics

<sup>116</sup> Siete años mas tarde en un discurso pronunciado ante la recién constituída Organización de Naciones Unidas en septiembre de 1949 en Lake Succes, Nueva Cork, Manuel Gamio dijo: "Hasta este siglo en que vivimos se ha comenzado a considerar de manera realista el problema de los aborígenes del continente y fue el I Congreso Indigenista de Pátzcuaro México, donde se plasmaron definitivamente en 1940, propuestas y recomendaciones para iniciar su resolución...". En "Panorama sobre el indigenismo continental", B1, V. X, n. 1, marzo de 1950, p. 70.

<sup>117</sup> Este año se celebró un Congreso Antropológico Internacional del 27 de abril al 2 de mayo en Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, con asistencia de delegados de Estados Unidos, México, Cuba y Centroamérica. El tema del evento fue "Mayas y Olmecas" y entre los participantes pueden mencionarse: Alfred V. Kidder, George C. Vaillant, Paul Kirchoff, Alfonso Caso, Alfonso Villa Rojas, Norman Mc. Qwaon, Juan Comas, Wigberto Jiménez Moreno, Salvador Toscano y otros notables de las ciencias antropológicas. En 1942 se reunieron asimismo Beals, Tax y Redfield para evaluar las nuevas estrategias de investigación en México y Guatemala y con los auspicios de la Institución Smithsonian se creó la sociedad Interamericana de Antropología y Geografía. Alfonso Caso, Lewis N. Hanke y Wigberto Jiménez Moreno fueron aceptados como socios activos de la SGHG. De mayo a junio de ese año, un grupo de danzantes de Jemez Pueblo, Nuevo México, recorrieron el Este de los Estados Unidos y según el BI vendieron aproximadamente 300 mil dólares en bonos de guerra destinados a financiar la participación norteamericana en la conflagración mundial. "Los indígenas de los Estados Unidos de buen grado han respaldado el programa de compras de Bonos de Guerra", aseguraba el encabezado de la nota ("Compras de bonos de guerra por los indios", BI, v. II, n. 4, diciembre de 1942, p. 19) Este año, además aunque todavía no fundaba su propio instituto, México fue declarado oficialmente país sede del III.

<sup>118</sup> Gamio estudio becado con Franz Boas en la Universidad de Columbia entre 1909 y 1911, A partir de 1917 se dedicó a la arqueología, En 1919 publicó *Empiricism of Latin American governments and the empiricism of their relations with the United States* en donde se prefigura su vocación por la ciencia aplicada y el indigenismo. Por invitación, del Institute of Pacific Affairs visitó el Japón en 1929 para comprobar la importancia alimenticia de la soya. Cuando tomó posesión, el 11 de abril de 1942 como director del III, Gamio tenía tras de sí una amplia experiencia que lo colocaba en una importante posición en la antropología continental. Diez días después de asumir la dirección, la embajada norteamericana ofreció una recepción en su honor. La matriz del indigenismo estaba por cosechar importantes frutos en América Latina. La filiación norteamericana de las concepciones de Gamio ha sido abordada por diversos autores pero las derivaciones centroamericanas de su pensamiento ameritarían un tratamiento más exhaustivo. En 1920, Gamio fundó la revista *Ethnos*. Los cambios en el subtítulo de esta publicación evidenciaron de alguna forma la naturaleza de sus objetivos. Por ejemplo, el no. 1 de *Ethnos* publicado en 1920, se denominaba "Revista mensual de estudios antropológicos sobre México y Centro América". El no. 2 de ese mismo año se identificaba como "Revista mensual para la vulgarización de estudios antropológicos sobre México y Centro América". Luego presagiando la vocación indigenista de su director, el no. 1, correspondiente a 1923, se presentaba como "Revista dedicada al estudio y mejoría de la población indígena de México y Centro América. Años más tarde, en julio de 1943, Gamio visitó oficialmente El Salvador, Honduras y Guatemala, en donde estuvo sólo unas horas. Manuel Gamio, director del III de 1942 a 1960, estuvo siempre atento al desarrollo de los procesos del istmo y su figura no fue desconocida por los indigenistas guatemaltecos. Los epígonos guatemaltecos identificaron desde un principio al indigenismo de Pátzcuaro con la experiencia mexicana. El propio III editorializó esta experiencia en diciembre de 1942 cuando Gamio aun no cumplía su primer año en la dirección y en Chiapas no se conocían todavía los alcances concretos del proyecto indigenista. "En México se inicia un vigoroso renacimiento indigenista", señalaba la nota. Tal "renacimiento" anterior a la experiencia cardenista no pasó desapercibido para los indigenistas guatemaltecos que pudieron ver México por vía de misiones oficiales ó por encontrarse exiliados. Uno de esos exégetas decía: "México, con la clara visión del instante porque atraviesa el mundo, ha dado principio a la sistemática labor de incorporar al indio a la civilización, resolviendo en primera línea el problema agrario y el educativo" (Juárez 1942:135) "El indio, dice en otra parte, también necesita salir del estado de salvaje en que ha permanecido por siglos. Se le obliga a asistir a la escuela y se fundan muchas escuelas rurales al alcance de los poblados más pequeños para que los hijos de los indios no sean lo que fueron sus padres: unos perfectos salvajes. El Partido de la Revolución Mexicana - continúa el autor guatemalteco- ha puesto su atención a este magno problema. Aquel país contiene una mayoría de indígenas de diferentes orígenes raciales de tales dimensiones, que resolver sus problemas, es resolver el problema económico y social de la nación" (Ibid.:135-136).

of study about Latin America indigenous populations: a) “Alimentación y hábitos alimenticios”<sup>119</sup> ; b) “Artes populares e indígenas”<sup>120</sup> ; c) “Oncocercosis”<sup>121</sup>, y d) “El Indio y la Democracia”<sup>122</sup>.

### Facing the “Indian problem”

Art. 83 "Se declara de utilidad e interés nacionales el desarrollo de una política integral para el mejoramiento económico, social y cultural de los grupos indígenas. A este efecto pueden dictarse leyes, reglamentos, disposiciones especiales para los grupos indígenas, contemplando sus necesidades, condiciones, prácticas, usos y costumbres".

Decretado por la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente el 11 de marzo de 1945

In the context of the popular opposition to Ubico's dictatorship in 1944, the *Asociación “El Derecho”*, which brought together students from the Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas de la Universidad de San Carlos, presented a public declaration demanding the

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<sup>119</sup> En cuanto alimentación y hábitos alimenticios los estudios a realizarse deberían hacerse considerando que el nivel de vida de muchos países depende en gran manera, o en parte, de la producción del trabajo de las poblaciones indígenas y que el Instituto Nacional Indigenista de los Estados Unidos en colaboración con la Universidad de Chicago realizó un estudio sobre la nutrición en varias comunidades que posteriormente sería la base "para el desarrollo de procedimientos y métodos de estudio en otros países". El Comité Directivo del III resolvió “confirmar la acción de Comité Ejecutivo y proponer un estudio interamericano sobre las costumbres populares de dieta alimenticia y recomendar que este estudio se iniciara en comunidades típicas en varios países en que se indicara: a) la clase de dieta actual y hasta que punto puede ser mejorada o cambiada, b) los factores agrícolas, sociológicos, etnológicos y económicos que determinan la clase de alimentación y c) cómo lograr que los indios se persuadan y habilitarlos para un cambio en la alimentación. Cfr. BI, v. II, n. 2, junio de 1942, pp. 3-4.

<sup>120</sup> En cuanto a las Artes Populares Indígenas considerando “que la enorme demanda americana de artículos textiles, trabajos en cuero y otros muchos productos manuales no puede ser satisfecha por la producción europea o asiática, debido a la clausura de sus exportaciones, y que los productos derivados y producidos por los indígenas pueden substituirlos ventajosamente. Y que el sistema actual de producción y distribución de las artes populares indígenas es inadecuado para llenar esta gran demanda, resuelve recomendar que entre los distintos países se convenga un tratamiento especial de exención en favor de la importación y exportación de dichos productos dentro del continente. De la misma forma, el director del instituto compilará los datos sobre barreras aduanales existentes en las repúblicas americanas en lo que respecta al comercio de productos indígenas, promoverá intercambio de experiencias sobre artes e industrias nativas e impulsará su producción y comercio en gran escala, ya que por la disminución del turismo, los fabricantes no hallan mercado suficiente. Cfr. Ibid. pp. 4-5.

<sup>121</sup> En lo que respecta a la Onchocercosis se asienta en los considerandos que sólo en México y Guatemala hay más de 40 mil indígenas con esa enfermedad que les ocasiona graves perturbaciones oculares que generalmente terminan en la ceguera, que las creencias de los indígenas y su resistencia a las prácticas quirúrgicas para extirpar la filaria onchocercosa impiden su tratamiento, que existe peligro de que la enfermedad se extienda debido a que la carretera panamericana atraviesa, regiones en donde las condiciones podrían provocar que llegue a ser endémica y se resuelve respaldar el trabajo de la Oficina Sanitaria Panamericana que desde hace varios años realizó estudios sobre esa enfermedad en México y Guatemala.

<sup>122</sup> En lo que respecta al apartado El Indio y la democracia se afirma que es importante hallar “modos de alentar y educar al indio para que funcione democráticamente en la vida de la comunidad, de la tribu, del estado y de la Nación, que se ha demostrado que es posible y de todo punto conveniente la cooperación voluntaria y sincera de los ancianos indígenas para explotar psicológicamente los elementos que integran su personalidad individual y colectiva. Se resuelve autorizar un estudio interamericano sobre el efecto de los programas gubernamentales de administración indígena y sobre la autonomía y las prácticas democráticas indígenas y sobre la actitud de individuos indígenas al respecto se hará participar a los mismos jefes indígenas”. (Ibid. p. 6).



resignation of the University authorities, the restoration of the University's autonomy and some internal reforms, including the creation of an Instituto de Ciencias Indigenistas<sup>123</sup> (Palomo 1975:210)<sup>124</sup>. In October, 1944, Ubico's dictatorship was overthrown by a *Junta cívico-militar*, headed by Major Francisco Javier Arana, Captain Jacobo Arbenz and businessman Jorge Toriello. The *Junta* named as presidential candidate the University professor Juan José Arévalo, who later won the elections with more than 85% of the vote<sup>125</sup>. At the time he took office, Arévalo was 41 years old and enjoyed great support from teachers. His government attracted international attention because of his "spiritual socialism" that was strongly influenced by his experience as a pedagogue<sup>126</sup>. In October,

<sup>123</sup> En la formulación de este ideario tuvo un papel relevante el entonces bachiller Manuel Galich, que formó parte del Grupo Indigenista integrado en diciembre de 1941. Posteriormente, tras la caída de la dictadura, Galich se convirtió en ministro de Educación del nuevo gobierno revolucionario. Escritor y dramaturgo, Galich nació en la ciudad de Guatemala en 1913. Fue Ministro de Educación y diplomático durante los gobiernos de Juan José Arévalo y Jacobo Arbenz. Exiliado político desde 1954. Obtuvo el premio Casa de las Américas en 1961. Subdirector de la Casa de las Américas de Cuba y profesor de Historia de la Universidad de la Habana (1970). Publicó en teatro, entre otras obras: *M'hijo el bachiller*, *Papa Natas*, *Gente decente*, *De lo vivo a lo pintado*, *El canciller Cadejo*, *Ida y vuelta*, *La mugre*, *El tren amarillo*, *El pescado indigesto* y *Pascual Abah*, *En historia y política: Del pánico al ataque y Por que lucha Guatemala*. Murió en La Habana en 1983. Cfr. Galich (1945)

<sup>124</sup> Al respecto es interesante destacar la advertencia que Ernest Maes, secretario del National Indian Institute de los Estados Unidos, que había acompañado a Manuel Gamio durante parte de su gira centroamericana en 1943, escribió a Redfield: "Es esencial evitar que dichos institutos (indigenistas) se conviertan en centros de discusión política en los que indianistas de propósitos bien intencionados pero fútiles, solamente se dediquen a hacer discursos revolucionarios sobre el indio, en vez de desarrollar métodos eficaces para enfrentarse al problema indígena" "Los futuros institutos indigenistas nacionales" en BI, v. III, n. 4, diciembre de 1943 P. 210. Maes había acompañado a Gamio en sus entrevistas con el dictador salvadoreño Maximiliano Hernández y con los embajadores de Estados Unidos y de México en el Salvador, según consigna éste en su informe ("Viaje del director del III", BI, v. III, n. 3, septiembre de 1943, p. 144). Maes escribió: "Estas ideas sobre el funcionamiento y organización de los Institutos Indigenistas Nacionales y sus relaciones con el Interamericano, las fuimos elaborando el Dr. Gamio y yo durante nuestra gira por Centro-América en un sinnúmero de charlas con competentes indianistas de esos países", afirma Maes en un informe presentado meses después que el del director del III. ("El III en América Central", BI, v. III, n. 4, diciembre de 1943, p. 220).

<sup>125</sup> En 1924 dos años después de haber obtenido su título de profesor normalista, fue nombrado jefe de la sección técnica del ministerio de Educación Pública e inspector de escuelas. Luego, a partir de 1927 y con breves intervalos, estudió y completó su formación pedagógica en Argentina llegando a ganar algún prestigio internacional que la dictadura ubquista no vio con agrado. En un discurso dirigido al joven Arévalo en 1931 durante una ceremonia en que la Sociedad de Auxilios Mutuos del Magisterio le entregó su diploma de Socio Honorario, el profesor Edelberto Torres pronunció unas palabras que resultaron proféticas: "El nombre de Juan José Arévalo, a pesar de su juventud, es ya una bandera para el magisterio de Guatemala, y algún día venceremos con esta bandera". (Ordóñez 1951: 225) El "Chilacayotón" como popularmente se le bautizó debido a la forma y el tamaño de su cabeza, tomó posesión de la presidencia el 15 de marzo de 1945.

<sup>126</sup> Cuando Arévalo tomó la presidencia de la república, el salario del campesino estaba en una escala que iba de cinco a veinte centavos de dólar al día; el 2% de los hacendados poseía el 72% de la tierra y el 90% de los pequeños propietarios tenían entre todos el 15% de los terrenos productivos. Los indígenas en el campo estaban atados a las grandes plantaciones por un antiquísimo sistema de trabajo forzado que imponía al menos 150 días al año de deuda de trabajo y aunque la primera constitución del país, adoptada en 1824, abolía la esclavitud, los sistemas de trabajo rural prevalecientes en 1945 eran apenas distinguibles de la servidumbre involuntaria. La tasa nacional de 75% de analfabetos llegaba hasta el 95% entre los indígenas. El promedio de vida era de 50 años para los ladinos y de 40 años para los indígenas. En tales

1946, the National Congress approved the first social security law in the country's history, which granted labor rights, workers' compensation for work-related accidents, maternity leave and job protection for pregnant women. Created in 1945, the Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social, launched a twenty-year program to build 67 new hospitals in rural areas. Even more important was the approval of a Labor Code in 1947, which protected workers from landowners. While the establishment of this Code greatly increased the popularity of the "Primer Gobierno de la Revolución"<sup>127</sup>, this action awakened fears of the spread of communism among landowners, the Catholic Church and the US government and corporations<sup>128</sup>. In reality, the Code had nothing to do with radical agricultural reforms or programs of industrial development that could change the strategic center of Guatemalan economy<sup>129</sup>.

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condiciones asumió la presidencia el doctor en pedagogía después de cuatro siglos de historia sombría y de la sucesión casi ininterrumpida de gobiernos autócratas. Una de las primeras medidas que tomó Arévalo fue aumentar sustancialmente los sueldos de los maestros.

<sup>127</sup> En junio de 1947, Salomón de la Selva escribió una serie de artículos en el periódico "El Universal" de México, D. F. Una de esas notas señalaba: "Hasta hace poco solían venderse las haciendas en Guatemala especificándose el número de cafetos, el de las mulas y otros animales y el de indios adscritos a la propiedad. Eso ha acabado por fin y en celebración del Código de Trabajo que el gobierno de la Revolución ha decretado, más de sesenta mil indígenas -hoscós antes, huidizos y ariscos- desfilaron alegremente el 1º de mayo que acaba de pasar, en la ciudad de Guatemala. Lo que explica la tormenta de la crítica, la andanada de calumnias, el ataque sistemático contra el régimen actual guatemalteco. Ese día el Presidente Arévalo pudo decir: "Se acabó para siempre aquella deliciosa libertad que consistía en tratar a los trabajadores con espíritu patriarcal o caritativo, cuando no perverso, dictatorial y cobarde. El código de Trabajo al terminar con la libertad de explotación económica y con la libertad de ultraje personal, crea una nueva libertad que no es privilegio de un grupo sino beneficio nacional: esa nueva libertad, que no ha existido en Guatemala, es la igualdad ante la ley". (cit. pos. Ordóñez 1951:233)

<sup>128</sup> "Su texto hizo que el FBI -que en días anteriores a la CIA era responsable de la recopilación de información sobre América Latina- reuniera legajos sobre Arévalo y otros ministros importantes de su gobierno. Antiguos simpatizantes de Ubico despertaron el interés del FBI alegando 'influencia comunista' en la legalización de los sindicatos de trabajadores realizada por Arévalo." (Schlesinger y Kinzer 1982: 52-53)

<sup>129</sup> Como el propio Arévalo diría, la paternidad de sus concepciones había que buscarla en la tradición nacionalista latinoamericana y en el ideario del presidente Roosevelt "...aquel líder de occidente, socialista y cristiano". Arévalo (1951: 218) Además, "mil quinientos días de guerra mundial habían expuesto a los guatemaltecos a las promesas de democracia oídas por los radios de onda corta. Las "Cuatro Libertades" del presidente Franklin Roosevelt -la declaración de que toda la humanidad tenía derecho a la libertad de expresión, a la libertad de religión, a estar libre de carencias y libre de temor, hizo surgir una nueva generación de guatemaltecos conscientes de las desigualdades dentro de su propia sociedad, e hizo de Roosevelt un héroe en Guatemala. Su defensa de los sindicatos tocó también una cuerda sensible en un país donde el trabajador estaba apenas empezando a pensar en organizarse. El Nuevo Trato de Roosevelt convenció a muchos guatemaltecos de que merecían un gobierno dedicado al bienestar público". Schlesinger y Kinzer (1982:40)

## Foundation of the Instituto Indigenista Nacional

As part of a special homage to the Facultad de Humanidades de la Universidad de San Carlos and with the "Estado Mayor del pensamiento Hispanoamericano" in attendance, the Instituto Indigenista Nacional was inaugurated in September 1945<sup>130</sup>. Manuel Galich, minister of Education and Antonio Goubaud Carrera, the new Institute's director, gave speeches about the future of Guatemalan indigenismo. Reinforcing these ideas, Roberto Agramonte, vice-rector of the Universidad de La Habana, gave a conference on "La sociología de la cultura"<sup>131</sup>. In his speech, Galich reiterated that "dentro de todos los problemas nacionales", the Indian is the "más agudo entre ellos". "No temo hiperbolizar - said Galich- afirmando que la creación del Instituto Indigenista es una obra revolucionaria, tanto porque para hacerla tuvimos que remover el gran obstáculo de la dictadura, como porque acusa un criterio distinto sobre la manera de enfocar el problema fundamental guatemalteco, y porque planteándolo en sus justos términos, gracias a una investigación verdaderamente científica, proporcionará al Estado la orientación técnica indispensable en su política a seguir". "La dictadura (ubiquista) no solo no propició la investigación científica del problema indígena sino que la menospreció (...) con el más absoluto desdén

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<sup>130</sup> La fuente de las citas relativas a los discursos de Galich y de Goubaud aparece en "Fundación e inauguración del Instituto Indigenista Nacional", BI, v.4, n. 4, diciembre de 1945, pp.362-364. Es interesante hacer notar que en el Boletín del Instituto Indigenista Nacional de Guatemala, el discurso de Galich aparece mutilado, por falta de espacio o lo que fuera, no se incluye lo relativo a las medidas adoptadas por el general Ubico contra la población indígena. Es interesante hacer notar que en sesión del 3 de julio de 1945 en la sede de la SGHG, Goubaud, David Vela y Robert Elliot Smith, representante de la Institución Carnegie en Guatemala, propusieron un plan para formar un Instituto de Antropología, Etnología e Historia. El 28 de agosto de 1945 se emitió el decreto de fundación del IIN y un mes más tarde se inauguró en el Paraninfo de la Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, sitio donde Robert Redfield había dictado el 5 de junio anterior una charla sobre "Los grupos étnicos y la nacionalidad".

<sup>131</sup> El doctor Agramonte, parte del "Estado Mayor del pensamiento Hispanoamericano", según la expresión utilizada por Galich, abrió su conferencia aludiendo a uno de sus ilustres paisanos. "Con el indio la América nuestra ha de andar, o no andará la América, predicaba Martí; y para que el indio ande, se funda este Instituto Indigenista, con la elevada proyección científica, humana y social, y con el programa certero y constructivo, que ha desenvuelto en su plática el excelentísimo señor ministro de Educación; señor Galich; y con el sentido real y eficaz del método, basado en el ver para prever, expuesto al modo magistral por el doctor Antonio Goubaud Carrera, especialista eminente en la problemática de la cultura y la antropología social".

por la investigación y la técnica, aportó tres soluciones fundamentales al problema

indígena: el cupo<sup>132</sup>, la farsa<sup>133</sup> y la negación”<sup>134</sup>.

After Galich, Antonio Goubaud Carrera<sup>135</sup> warned that he would offer a "brevísima relación" about the proposed indigenismo, and a succinct overview of Guatemala's ethnic process and the future tasks of the IIN<sup>136</sup>. "El indigenismo como acción social pertenece al

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<sup>132</sup> Galich se refería al hecho señalado por la prensa oficial en 1943 respecto a que "los cuarteles y demás centros militares se han convertido durante la administración del Comandante General don Jorge Ubico, en verdaderos centros de enseñanza, con lo que se ha logrado que los individuos que entran al servicio sin saber una letra, salgan sabiendo leer y escribir".

<sup>133</sup> Además, consideraba una farsa el decreto 1995 emitido por la Asamblea Legislativa del 7 de marzo de 1934 en que se prohibía a los finqueros dar anticipo a jornaleros y colonos para trabajar en sus propiedades. Con este decreto "se tuvo por consumada la redención del indio", dijo Galich y de manera forci voluntaria los indígenas fueron obligados a construir un monumento en agradecimiento al dictador.

<sup>134</sup> El régimen ubiquista asimismo -recordó- por conducto de su Ministro de Educación Jorge del Valle Matéu, negó durante una Conferencia de Ministros celebrada en Panamá que en Guatemala existiera "*problema indígena*". Se refiere a la ponencia presentada en 1943, la cual fue publicada por la Tipografía Nacional ese mismo año. "Con esas tres medidas salvadoras: el cupo, el desenterramiento de una ley emitida 300 años antes y la fecunda imaginación de un funcionario ¿para qué pensar en la creación de un Instituto Indigenista? -se preguntó Galich-. "Lo primero que una política honrada exige -afirmó el ministro hacia el final de su discurso- es la confesión de que no sabemos nada acerca del indio guatemalteco y de que por consiguiente es necesario iniciar una *investigación científica* al respecto. Apenas si ha habido aislados y difíciles buceos en la realidad étnica de Guatemala, que se han quedado como heroicos esfuerzos de vocación personal, sin que hayan sido tomados en cuenta para orientar la política indigenista del Estado. De manera que más que las soluciones mágicas e instantáneas preferimos el esfuerzo lento, fundado en la ciencia, para proceder después a la acción metódica. Esto es lo que persigue el Instituto Indigenista Nacional que hoy se inaugura".

<sup>135</sup> Antonio Goubaud Carrera. Hizo sus estudios secundarios en el colegio alemán de Guatemala, en la Belmont Military Academy y el St. Mary's Collage de California. Obtuvo su bachillerato y licenciatura en Ciencias sociales en la Universidad de Chicago, gracias a que fue seleccionado de una lista proporcionado por el gobierno del general Jorge Ubico al Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos para disfrutar de una beca ofrecida por la Convención Internacional para el Intercambio de becados entre las naciones de América. Algunos lo consideraron el "padre de indigenismo" guatemalteco ya que fue el primer director del Instituto Indigenista Nacional fundado en 1945, de donde salió en 1949 para ocupar el cargo de embajador de Guatemala en Washington. Su carrera fue meteórica pues en un lapso menor de diez años pasó de becario de la Universidad de Chicago a embajador. Durante su gestión al frente del IIN se impulsaron diversos proyectos y se obtuvieron resultados importantes que merecieron reconocimiento especial por parte de los directivos del Indigenista Interamericano. Fue cercano colaborador y luego colega de Robert Redfield a quien otorgó siempre un lugar eminente entre todos los científicos extranjeros que empezaron a llegar a Guatemala en los años 30. Su producción científica arranca con la traducción de la monografía de Stoll sobre etnología guatemalteca. Realizó un estudio sobre alimentación financiado por Carnegie de noviembre de 1941 a marzo de 1942. Participó en trabajos de etnografía exploratoria junto a Tax y Rosales en el altiplano guatemalteco y desarrolló interesantes trabajos lingüísticos. Fue jefe de la sección de etnología del Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología, profesor de la Universidad Autónoma de San Carlos y de la Escuela de Servicio Social con quienes el IIN mantuvo estrechos lazos de cooperación. Además fue miembro de las más importantes sociedades científicas de Europa y América entre las que se cuentan: The American Anthropological Association, The Royal Anthropological Society of Great Britain and Ireland, The Society for Applied Anthropology, Inc., de los Estados Unidos, Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología, entre otras. Falleció en 1951 cuando aún no cumplía, dos años al frente de su puesto diplomático.

<sup>136</sup> "El indigenismo, no cabe duda -afirmó Goubaud- es la manifestación, el síntoma de un determinado malestar social. Donde no hay indígenas no hay indigenismo. Si lo hay es expresión de un interés arqueológico. Podríamos resumir el proceso de la evolución del indigenismo en Guatemala -enfaticó- diciendo que su origen está en la arqueología nuestra, plasmado en la piedra y la alfarería milenaria, que poco a poco nos van dando sus secretos..." Ya Galich en una parte de su discurso había hecho una valoración de la arqueología al referirse a la "noble curiosidad por el conocimiento mejor de un generoso pasado, que quiso elegir a Guatemala para que en ella se realizase la síntesis milagrosa de una cultura característicamente americana". Cuatro años más tarde se organizó un Centro de Estudios Arqueológicos al interior del recién fundado Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (IDAEH) (1947) en donde se dictaron los primeros cursos de arqueología bajo la dirección de Alfred V. Kidder, Heinrich Berlín, Joel Camby y Hugo Cerezo Dardon.

campo de la ética en donde pueden distinguirse dos posiciones fundamentales”: one that “hace hincapié en la invulnerabilidad del grupo étnico” and another related to the “intento de realización de una nacionalidad homogénea” (Redfield 1945). “There are not enough criteria to determine who is Indian and who is not”, Goubaud remarked. “The answer has to come”, he claimed, “después de una extensa indagación entre personas pertenecientes a las diversas comunidades sociales del país”.<sup>137</sup> “El problema de las diversidades étnicas es nuestro problema fundamental”, insisted the new director<sup>138</sup>.

### ***El proyecto indigenista 1945-1954***

Arévalo developed his own concept of “socialismo espiritual” or “espiritualista” based on the influences of the German and Argentinian krausismo (Stoetzer 1996)<sup>139</sup>. He

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<sup>137</sup> Ese mismo año, (1945), Goubaud escribió un trabajo sobre los criterios para la definición del grupo étnico que fue reeditado en 1958. En carta a John Collier, Goubaud insistió en que el IIN se propondría fomentar una participación mayor del indígena en la “estructura económica”. “Con ello -dijo Goubaud- el indígena llegará a poseer una mejor posición económica que le permitirá aumentar su poder adquisitivo, elevar su nivel de vida, y contribuir ampliamente a la vida nacional, tanto en lo que se refiere al propio país, como a lo que concierne a todo el hemisferio americano”. En lo relativo a los proyectos inmediatos de estudio del Instituto, mencionó tres: 1. Establecer las características de la cultura indígena en determinados municipios, para aportar bases al Programa de la nueva Escuela formal Normal Regional, en colaboración con el Ministerio de Educación Pública. 2. Colaborar con la Dirección General de estadística para levantar un censo escolar real y efectivo. 3. Colaborar con el Ministerio de Economía y Trabajo en conexión con la Oficina Internacional del Trabajo -organismo que fue de la Liga de las Naciones- para el estudio de los sistemas de trabajo indígenas. (BIIN, v. II, n. 2-3, marzo-junio de 1946, pp. 86-87)

<sup>138</sup> Al hablar del “mosaico cultural” que es Guatemala, aseguro que éste está compuesto por “unas doscientas entidades étnicas indígenas, que se diferencian en mayor o menor grado entre sí, pero que por tal diferenciación deben considerarse como grupos étnicos distintos”, ...cuántos guatemaltecos habrá -preguntó Goubaud que- hablando idiomas extraños al idioma nacional, vistiendo trajes de fantasía que los señalan del resto de la población, atormentados por creencias que una ilustración mediana elimina, atados a tecnologías que datan de miles de años atrás -cuántos, cabe preguntarse- pensarán que Guatemala no es sólo lo que enmarcan las montañas limítrofes de su comunidad social?”. Para enfrentarse a este problema el gobierno fundó el IIN, apuntó Goubaud. Como organismo asesor de las labores del IIN se formó un Consejo Consultivo integrado de la siguiente manera; Por la Universidad de San Carlos, José Rolz Bennet; por la SGHG, David Vela; por la Institución Carnegie, Roberto Elliot Smith; por la Asociación General de Agricultores, Francisco Quintana; por el Ministerio de Educación Pública, Luciano Tahay; por el Ministerio de Economía y trabajo Jorge del Pinal; por el Ministerio de Agricultura, Juan Pablo Duque; por el Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social, Romeo de León, un representante del Ministerio de Gobernación y, admirable conclusión, dos representantes de comunidades indígenas.

<sup>139</sup> “Si llamamos “espiritualista” a este socialismo de posguerra, explicaba Arévalo- es porque en el mundo -como ahora en Guatemala, se producirá un vuelco fundamental en la escala de los valores humanos. La prédica materialista ha quedado evidenciada como un nuevo instrumento al servicio de las doctrinas totalitarias. El comunismo, el fascismo y el nazismo también han sido socialistas. Pero un socialismo que daba de comer con la mano izquierda, mientras con la mano derecha mutilaba las esencias morales y civiles del hombre. Del nacional socialismo, el más moderno de todos estos sistemas, solo pudo brotar, por eso, un conglomerado de trabajadores mecanizados bien vestidos y bien comidos, que habían perdido como precio de esas ventajas, su jerarquía como ciudadanos y su autoridad dentro de la familia. A diferencia de ellos, “el socialismo espiritualista, afirmaba, superará la fórmula filosófica del nazismo, que sólo concede personalidad al conductor, comenzará -como el liberalismo- por devolver a la personalidad moral y civil toda su majestad; pero irá más allá del liberalismo al cancelar la insularidad del hombre obligándolo a engarzarse en la atmósfera de los

believed that improvements in the quality of life of the less fortunate members of society would be very difficult to achieve without changes in the country's agrarian structure and social services. The arevalista strategy attempted, with relative success, to move from politics to the economy, emphasizing literacy first, followed by an assessment of the social conditions and the particular implementation of public policies. As part of its effort to measure "la magnitud del problema indígena", the Ministry of Public Education organized a national convention of Indian teachers in the northern city of Cobán, Alta Verapaz, in June, 1945<sup>140</sup>. That convention addressed different problems afflicting Indian communities, centering its attention on the development of an educational reform that could resolve Guatemala's national problems<sup>141</sup>. The gathering, led by Goubaud Carrera and William Griffith, was the first of its kind in the nation's history<sup>142</sup>. This educational reform brought important changes to the rural and urban majorities that had never before received benefits from the State.<sup>143</sup> Arévalo endorsed the idea that education was the safest way to

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valores, las necesidades y los fines de la sociedad, entendida ésta simultáneamente como un organismo económico y como una entidad espiritual. Lo espiritual, sin embargo, regirá en esta imagen del mundo a los planos económicos de la vida, para fecundarlos, para infundirles sentido nacional" Arévalo (1953:132).

<sup>140</sup> Al evento asistieron 34 maestros de un total de 65 invitados procedentes de 21 municipios, destacando la participación de Manuel Galich, ministro de Educación, William J. Griffith, representante especial de la Fundación Interamericana de Educación Inc., Antonio Goubaud Carrera, director del Instituto y de David Vela, representante del periódico El Imparcial y presidente del Primer Grupo Indigenista creado en diciembre de 1941.

<sup>141</sup> Entre las diez recomendaciones emitidas al respecto, sobresalieron la propuesta de crear una escuela normal para maestros rurales y escuelas nocturnas para adultos. Paralelamente se insistió en que por razones metodológicas se adoptaría el criterio de castellanizar antes de alfabetizar. Se propuso asimismo celebrar un congreso de lingüistas con participación de todos los grupos indígenas para unificar criterios fonéticos y alfabéticos de las lenguas indígenas y registrarlas en "discos de grabación eléctrica", para conservar sus sonidos en el mayor grado de pureza".

<sup>142</sup> "Los resultados obtenidos en la Convención pueden considerarse como brillantes —señaló el Boletín del IIN— pues marcaron al Gobierno y a los habitantes todos de la Nación, una de las rutas a seguirse en beneficio de la población indígena y de la colectividad, ya que al elevarse el nivel cultural de éste, se mejoran todos los aspectos de la vida nacional" "Incorporación indígena, convención de maestros indígenas en Cobán", BIIN, v. I, n.1, octubre-diciembre de 1945.

<sup>143</sup> En 1939 Arévalo escribió: "Hace más de un siglo que estas naciones se organizaron movilizadas por ideales democráticos, y en muchas de ellas hay todavía millonadas de indígenas que carecen de participación en la vida de la nación y a quienes se les ha negado siempre efectiva ingerencia en la vida política y cultural". (Arévalo 1945:39) "Si se exceptúan ciertos focos en los que se produce una extraordinaria y rápida asimilación, —afirmó el pedagogo— en el resto de Nuestra América los contingentes europeos se aíslan y se organizan en factoría con evidente menosprecio de todo lo americano". (Ibid). En otra parte escribió: "Más de cien años de vida independiente denuncian que los poderes del Estado y la escuela, en la mayoría de los países de América, han hecho poca cosa para regular la distribución de la riqueza pública y para consolidar en las conciencias individuales, el verdadero espíritu republicano. Particularmente la escuela llamada "popular" ha seguido siendo patrimonio de los habitantes de las ciudades y grandes poblados" —decía Arévalo—

incorporate Indians into the nation. "Llevaremos las escuelas a las aldeas y algunas de esas escuelas tendrán ruedas para trepar en las montañas y meterse en los bosques" announced Arévalo in his inauguration speech. 60 years later, it is possible to say that rural education in Guatemala was created by the Revolución de octubre de 1944<sup>144</sup>.

As part of the educational reform, in January 1946, the government conducted a census that revealed that more than four-fifths of the school-aged rural population had not received any kind of formal education<sup>145</sup>. The government subsequently instituted the most

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.Ibid: 40-41. Cfr. Arévalo (1953) y en lo referente a su programa educativo, Chavarría (1951). Dentro de la euforia patriótica, esfuerzo de alto nivel se perfilaban en el plano artístico e intelectual. Uno de estos, la Revista de Guatemala, fundada en 1945 por el maestro Luis Cardoza y Aragón, supo ver a la distancia el perfil de la sociedad guatemalteca en los años posteriores. Al salir a la luz pública, editorializó Cardoza: "La vida de la revista se halla ligada a la consolidación del triunfo de la juventud de Guatemala en el poder. Para servir tales ideales y esperanzas,, surge abierta a todos los espíritus creadores. Destruiremos la revista o nos retiraremos de ella, cuando la menor intervención pretenda insinuarse contra nuestra imprescindible libertad. Guatemala, como desgraciadamente otros pueblos de América, durante años que sumados forman centurias, sólo ha tenido relámpagos de democracia. Muchos problemas internos bullen en Guatemala, semejantes a los de naciones hermanas en donde la población indígena es base nacional; donde el analfabetismo alcanza trágica cifra: donde compañías extranjeras imperialistas que son dueños de parte de nuestra riqueza e influyen en la economía del país, necesitan, para perdurar, el atraso de nuestro pueblo y la creación y mantenimiento de tiranías; donde el pueblo, por estas circunstancias y otras más –que no se hace indispensable enumerar– muchas veces lucha contra sus propios intereses y ataca a sus más puros defensores; donde toda idea de justicia y libertad sociales, por calumniosa propaganda de lustrós, significación monstruosa". (Cardoza 1945:5-6) Vale la pena mencionar que durante la primera época de la revista Antonio Goubaud Carrera fue miembro de su consejo Editorial. "...en ese momento nuestro único antropólogo, (...) era conservador; por ello lo necesitaba, con el fin de reunir todas las voces cultas. Murió joven y en nada intervino en mi designio de fundarla". (Cardoza 1986:628)

<sup>144</sup> Una de las primeras leyes promulgadas por el movimiento patriótico de 1944 se dedicó a la alfabetización y luego se crearon el Departamento Nacional de Alfabetización, las Misiones Ambulantes de Cultura Inicial, los Núcleos Escolares Campesinos, la Universidad Popular, las Escuelas Nocturnas, las escuelas Normales Rurales y centros de formación de maestros bilingües a cargo del Instituto Indigenista Nacional. La ambiciosa reforma educativa contempló además entre otras cosas el reconocimiento de la autonomía universitaria y la creación de una Facultad de Humanidades en la Universidad de San Carlos (USAC). El IIN, a petición de la Dirección General de Estadística (DGE) tradujo a los idiomas quiché, cakchiquel, tzutuhil, mam y kekchí, propaganda impresa y grabada relativa a la mecánica del censo. "El gobierno -decía uno de los mensajes- tiene el propósito decidido de establecer todas las escuelas que faltan para que ningún niño guatemalteco crezca ignorante de los derechos y deberes que tendrá cuando sea ciudadano". (...) "No se trata de molestarte en ninguna forma -continuaba el aviso- al contrario, lo que quiere el Gobierno es educar bien a tu hijo para que sea hombre honrado, sin vicio y trabajador. Es mentira -insistía- si te dicen que la autoridad quiere imponerte trabajos obligatorios e impuestos" El Instituto presentó a la DGE sus opiniones sobre la forma más conveniente de realizar el Censo de las Américas de 1950 (Censo de población, vivienda, agricultura, ganadería, industria, costo de vida y condiciones económicas de la población). El Instituto sugirió que en este censo se sustituyera el término "raza" por el de "grupo étnico". Asimismo, recomendó eliminar las marcas puestas en las casas ya censadas por el temor que esto despertaba principalmente en las comunidades indígenas. Después de concluido el censo escolar se inició la Primera Campaña Nacional de Alfabetización. Arévalo había dicho: "Los guatemaltecos alfabetos debemos comprender que es inaplazable la cancelación de la deuda de cultura que tenemos con los grandes sectores del país". (González Orellana 1970)

<sup>145</sup> "Censo Escolar", BIIN, v. II, n. 2-3, marzo-junio de 1946, p. 8. Antes de 1940, se había realizado un Censo Nacional de población que, según Skinner (1954) no es confiable. En 1950 se realizó otro que consideró indígenas al 53% de los habitantes del país. En 1921, un censo realizado con los límites de la época, no distinguió calidades étnicas. En 1893, otro censo, cronológicamente más cercano a los anteriores, registró un porcentaje de 64.7% de población indígena. 8. González (1970) 9. "Alfabetización indígena, BIIN, v. II, n 2-3, marzo-junio de 1946, p. 4 10. Ibid. En relación a la necesidad de la castellanización, Caso, luego de hacer un reconocimiento protocolario al trabajo del IIN, afirmó: "...es indudable que

extensive rural education program in Guatemalan history. Between 1945 and 1950, the Guatemalan government implemented seven literacy programs that created economic and political opportunities for vast sectors of the population. Literacy was a first step in gaining in-depth understanding of the socioeconomic reality of the indigenous communities, out of which grew the possibility of “scientific” initiatives that could improve their standard of living<sup>146</sup>. Beginning in 1945, the Ministry of Public Education had begun looking for a new approach to literacy for indigenous people in their own language, “en vista de la relativa dificultad que a través de la enseñanza pedagógica se ha presentado para la enseñanza de la lectura y la escritura” (en castellano), particularmente a los niños”<sup>147</sup>.

The Institute was in charge of developing recommendations “que tiendan al más eficaz resultado de esta encomiable labor que se propone llevar a cabo el Estado”<sup>148</sup>. A

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quien habla exclusivamente una lengua indígena, no está capacitado para colaborar en la vida económica, social y política de su país; que es en realidad extranjero en su propio país, que su horizonte económico y cultural, no puede exceder de su comunidad o su región, y por otra parte, no es posible que con el uso exclusivo de una lengua indígena, se pueda lograr una cultura progresiva, que pueda captar los modernos descubrimientos de las técnicas y el movimiento intelectual del mundo. De aquí que la castellanización del indígena, sin prohibir por supuesto el uso de las lenguas vernáculas, sea un paso muy importante en la liberación del indio”. (Caso 1951:153)

<sup>146</sup> Estos planteamientos contaban con el apoyo de entidades como el Servicio Cooperativo Interamericano de Educación (SCIDE) y el Instituto Lingüístico de Verano (ILV). Estos lazos de cooperación, en algunos casos, como en el del SCIDE, se interrumpieron debido a denuncias del magisterio nacional que consideraba lesiva a la soberanía del país, la presencia de asesores especialmente norteamericanos. Técnicos, lingüistas y antropólogos norteamericanos que participaron en el experimento educativo guatemalteco de los gobiernos de la revolución, participaron más tarde en labores de apoyo a la iniciativa integracionista posterior a la contrarrevolución de 1954. Esta iniciativa priorizó la castellanización y la alfabetización como medio de alcanzar la ladinización de los indígenas y combatir al comunismo.

<sup>147</sup> “Alfabetización indígena, BIIN, v. II, n 2-3, marzo-junio de 1946, p. 4. Una de las primeras medidas adoptadas por el gobierno fue comisionar al IIN para que mediante visitas a los maestros rurales se recogiera su opinión sobre el mecanismo más adecuado para mejorar la educación escolar. Uno de los maestros entrevistados, Raúl Polanco, inspector técnico del Ministerio del ramo para la zona que comprendía Solóla y Totonicapán opinó: “Hay mucha culpa de parte del maestro rural en el alejamiento de nuestro indio de la cultura occidental; no se ha borrado en los maestros la creencia de que “el indio por mal quiere” y no han tomado en cuenta, que no pudieron las férreas huestes medievales de la vieja España hacer lo que los padres dominicos hicieron con él y la palabra dulce en su propio dialecto para llegar a su corazón y conquistarlo”. Ibid. p. 64 Polanco informa que el maestro Bienvenido Jiménez, fue el primero en encargarse de servir una clase en idioma cakchiquel. Años más tarde, Jiménez escribió un libro sobre Educación Rural.

<sup>148</sup> Un proyecto de alfabetización en idiomas indígenas fue elaborado por Joaquín Noval, Juan de Dios Rosales y Alberto Arreaga. Como área experimental se escogió la región kekchí y se dividió el ensayo en cuatro fases: La primera consistiría en la introducción del alfabeto, aprendizaje de la lectura y escritura en lengua materna, la segunda consistiría en ejercicios intensivos de lectura y escritura en lengua materna, una tercera fase de aprendizaje de lectura y escritura en castellano y una fase final de aplicación y ejercicio de lo aprendido, en castellano, al objetivo último como se observa era la alfabetización y castellanización simultánea Ibid. En relación a la necesidad de la castellanización, Caso, luego de hacer un reconocimiento protocolario al trabajo del IIN guatemalteco, afirmó: “...es indudable que quien habla exclusivamente una lengua indígena, no está capacitado para colaborar en la vida económica, social y política de su país; que es en realidad extranjero en su propio país, que su horizonte económico y cultural, no puede exceder de su comunidad o su región, y por otra parte, no es posible que con el uso exclusivo de una lengua indígena, se pueda lograr una cultura



year later after its creation, the Institute it already had a clear understanding of the linguistic complexity of the country. In June 1946, it published a preliminary map of indigenous languages, with the goal of having the final version ready "tal vez hasta dentro de unos dos años"<sup>149</sup>. The map was designed for the use of "funcionarios públicos, los sacerdotes, los finqueros, los maestros, los hombres de negocios y para todo aquel que tenga trato directo con el indígena o con su cultura" (Ibid.)<sup>150</sup>.

In 1946, Arevalo created the *Misiones Ambulantes de Cultura Inicial*, which were made up of a licensed teacher, a military official, a last year medical student, an agricultural technician and indigenous translators. These *Misiones* were aimed at "los sitios más alejados de los centros de cultura, los principios básicos sobre alfabetismo, higiene, sanidad, agricultura racional, civismo, diversiones sanas y otros aspectos de la civilización actual, esperando redimir del obscurantismo a las masas pobres y aisladas".<sup>151</sup> Among its activities, the *Misiones* were in charge of teaching peasants in the farthest reaches of the

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progresiva, que pueda captar los modernos descubrimientos de las técnicas y el movimiento intelectual del mundo. De aquí que la castellenización del indígena, sin prohibir por supuesto el uso de las lenguas vernáculos, sea un paso muy importante en la liberación del indio". (Caso 1951:153)

<sup>149</sup> BIIN, v. II, n.2-3, marzo-junio de 1946, p.63

<sup>150</sup> Para elaborar este mapa se tuvieron en cuenta dos realizados por Stoll en 1884 y 1886 respectivamente. Además se utilizaron los publicados por Cyrus Thomas y John R. Swanton en 1911, los de William Gates, publicados uno en 1920 y otro en 1932, que fueran reproducidos por J. Antonio Villacorta C., en su edición del "Memorial de Tecpán-Atitlán" y el mapa lingüístico de Fredrick Jonson, el más reciente de todos ellos, publicado en 1940. El doctor Kart Sapper publicó un mapa detallado de los idiomas y dialectos de las Varapeces, que sirvió para establecer las fronteras básicas de las lenguas indígenas de esas regiones, sin detallar los dialectos de los municipios como lo hizo Sapper. Bajo los auspicios de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala se llevó a cabo en el año de 1938 una encuesta de las lenguas indígenas de todo el país, por medio de una tarjeta impresa que contenía veinticinco vocablos en español, y cuyas equivalencias a las lenguas indígenas fueron suministradas por los maestros de las escuelas de los municipios del país. Estos datos proporcionados por la SGHG y los reunidos por el Instituto durante los primeros meses de 1946 sirvieron para dar mayor precisión a los límites de las lenguas indígenas.

<sup>151</sup> "Informe del Instituto Indigenista Nacional: 1947", BI, v. III, n.1, marzo de 1948, p. 40. En relación a la situación del país y el papel de las campañas gubernamentales, se decía, al finalizar el mandato de Arévalo: "Nuestro gobierno, con diferentes nombres sus dependencias, es en realidad, un departamento de asuntos indígenas, o mejor, debiera ser lo. El problema económico —el de la tierra, primordialmente—, lo encontramos como base, en todas direcciones, saliendo al paso en cualquier empresa honda que se quiera o deba realizar (...) hay serranías en que aún se cree que Entrada Cabrera es el gobernante... Se siente resistencia para las misiones, para las campañas alfabetizadoras, para los investigadores censales. Y es natural que así sea, porque los gobiernos se han ido, liberales y conservadores, y la autoridad —indígena, blanco o mestizo— por lo general, siempre ha encarnado abuso y vejamen para el aborigen. Y los indígenas se han metido dentro de sí, hartos de persecuciones y molestias, viviendo tal en la época paleolítica, cultivando el maíz, como lo vemos en la códices, sin memoria de que fueron los creadores de la más alta civilización del Nuevo Mundo". "El gobierno del presidente Juan José Arévalo, apuntes para un balance" en Revista de Guatemala 1 (1) 1951, 2ª. época p. 32.

country their civic duties and civil rights, basic military skills and the social and moral basis of the *Revolución*. They would also denounce the political legacy of past governments, including the suppression of the use of mecapal, promoting the use of shoes, teaching sports and other “healthy” pastimes (Ibid.: 42)<sup>152</sup>. At the same time, the *Núcleos Escolares Campesinos* were created with the advice of US experts, who were working through a cooperative agreement with the Guatemalan government. Nevertheless, in 1950, the agreement with the SCIDE was ended "debido a algunas quejas que se presentaron en distintos lugares del país, en el sentido de que los funcionarios de aquella entidad norteamericana, aprovechando las posibilidades que ofrece la educación, empezaron a socavar las bases de la nacionalidad guatemalteca, despertando en los educandos un exagerado sentimiento de gratitud y admiración hacia el país que estaba brindando aquella cooperación"<sup>153</sup>.

In the 1940s, Guatemala became a point of interest for researchers and students from the United States.<sup>154</sup> Most of these researchers came with a specific plan, usually connected to the Inter-American strategy pushed by the US government through the

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<sup>152</sup> Las misiones también recogerían “en un libro todo lo relativo al folklore de los habitantes” y levantarían “una carta geográfica de la zona investigada para fines económicos, docentes, militares y cívicos”. En febrero de 1949 el Instituto inició cursos de capacitación para los miembros de las Misiones, técnicos de campo con que el gobierno arealista respaldó el desarrollo de sus programas.

<sup>153</sup> Refiriéndose a este hecho, el doctor Arévalo declaró en 1950 en su informe al Congreso: "Por razones fiscales, el 30 de junio se dió por terminado el Convenio conforme al cual funcionaba en el país, el Servicio Interamericano de Educación Pública. Pero corresponde dejar constancia de que fueron numerosas y persistentes las solicitudes para que el gobierno así lo hiciera, por creer elementos del magisterio que se perturbaba la unidad y el espíritu nacionalista en el orden educativo". (González Orellana 1979:58)

<sup>154</sup> Por ejemplo, la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala asienta en su memoria de labores correspondiente al año 1948: “En anteriores años se ha visto el interés que despiertan, sobre todo durante la temporada de los cursos de verano que vienen patrocinando con buen suceso la Facultad de Humanidades; a los cuales concurren muchos estudiantes norteamericanos, las charlas de mesa redonda, en las que los visitantes inquietan lo que les causa duda en los textos de nuestra historia o averiguan no pocos motivos de aprendizaje que desde su país, les producen necesidad de saber. El pasado del pueblo maya es en estos tiempos motivo de inquisición y si las universidades de Norteamérica dedican tiempo, energía y dinero a la investigación de esta raza, natural es que alumnos que de allá vienen participen de tal aspiración y quieran preguntar y repreguntar, en el propio suelo que los atrae”. “Memoria de las labores de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala durante el año social 1948 a 1949”. Es oportuno recordar que en 1950 el gobierno norteamericano estableció un Programa de los Cuatro Puntos, llamado posteriormente Administración de Cooperación Técnica, Administración de Cooperación Internacional y a partir de 1961, luego de la revolución cubana y bajo el influjo de Kennedy, Agencia Internacional para el Desarrollo. En todas estas instancias siempre trabajaron antropólogos. cfr. Foster (1974:316).

Organization of American States. Based on the decision of the US State Department, and thanks to a cooperative agreement between the National Indian Institute and the Guatemalan government, in June of 1946, Mark Hanna Watkins, the first African-American graduate in anthropology from Chicago University, was appointed to carry out an study "con el fin de establecer en forma efectiva la distribución de los dialectos y lenguas indígenas de Guatemala"<sup>155</sup>. Watkins began by studying the Cakchiquel region, and by March of 1947, he had covered the municipalities of Patzún, San Juan Sacatepéquez, San Pedro Sacatepéquez y Solóla. In these last three municipalities, Juan de Dios Rosales worked under Watkins direction. Rosales, who had been at the University of Chicago, was an student at the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia de México and was funded by the Guatemalan government.<sup>156</sup> The work of Watkins included the development of an alphabet for written K'iche' and Mam, with the final goal of designing "cartillas para alfabetización". It was expected that by mid-1947 the phonetic, morphological and

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<sup>155</sup> "Alfabetización indígena", BIIN, v. II, n. 2-3, marzo-junio de 1946, p. 3. En relación a las lenguas indígenas de Guatemala, Schumann (1985) nos dice que "el número de lenguas que conforman la familia (maya) es aún un punto a discutirse, ya que mientras algunos autores como T. Kaufman consideran se trata de 30 lenguas, otros hablan de 26. La polémica estriba en que lo que para unos investigadores son variantes diferencias o dialectos divergentes de un idioma, para otros son lenguas. (...) Se han planteado varias hipótesis con respecto al origen de estas lenguas (mayas), las más conocidas son las siguientes: 1) Que vinieron de Norte América y, en su paso hacia el sur, quedaron aislados los huastecos que habitan actualmente parte de los estados de San Luis Potosí y Veracruz (México). 2) Son originarios de la zona de Chalchupán en la república de El Salvador. 3) El punto de dispersión de esta familia se encuentra en los Chumatanes (sierras altas noroccidentales de Guatemala). 4) Que debe conectarse a los hablantes de estos idiomas con los restos arqueológicos más antiguos que se han encontrado en Belice. Al parecer son las últimas dos hipótesis, las que resultan más viables para varios investigadores, ya que la primera no cuenta con pruebas suficientes; la segunda es la más fácil de descartar, por el simple hecho que no toma en cuenta la presencia de la familia lingüística xinca del oriente y sur de Guatemala; aunque la región del oriente ahora es maya y antes lo fue xinca, muestra terminología geográfica en esta última lengua, pero no sucede lo contrario; la tercera parece ser la más adecuada, pero tiene el grave inconveniente de que no hay datos arqueológicos que la apoyen, aunque esto se debe, no a la carencia de los mismos, sino a que no se ha trabajado la región de una forma consistente. La cuarta se ha propuesto últimamente, tiene algunos seguidores, pero aún no ha sido demostrada con amplitud".

<sup>156</sup> Juan de Dios Rosales realizó estudios por espacio de cerca de siete años en la comunidad tzutuhil de San Pedro la Laguna en colaboración con Tax y Redfield, con financiamiento de la Institución Carnegie y de la Fundación Rockefeller, y como parte del Proyecto de Investigaciones Etnológicas en el área maya de México y Guatemala. En una nota, escrita en 1941, Redfield se refiere a él como "indio nativo de una comunidad cercana a San Pedro", pueblo del cual escribió una monografía durante una estancia corta en la universidad de Chicago a donde viajó juntamente con Goubaud. Hizo sus estudios de licenciatura en antropología social en la Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia de la ciudad de México. Llegó a ser director del Instituto de Indigenista Nacional en 1954 en donde se había desempeñado como jefe de Investigaciones Técnicas. Su entrenamiento inicial lo recibió del doctor Manuel Andrade, lingüista guatemalteco que trabajó en los años 30 bajo los auspicios de Carnegie. Participó en el trabajo de etnografía exploratoria realizado por Tax y Goubaud en el altiplano noroccidental guatemalteco. A partir de 1954 brindó especial apoyo a las actividades del Instituto Lingüístico de Verano que se lo agradeció públicamente en diversas oportunidades.

syntactic bases of cakchiquel would be developed for the literacy program that was to begin during the first months of 1948<sup>157</sup>.

Another US expert mentioned above, William J. Griffith, director of the Inter-American Foundation, requested IIN support in 1945 to carry out a study in the cakchiquel region in order to find the best place to set up a Escuela Normal Rural Regional. To this end, Griffith obtained the collaboration of the IIN team directed by Watkins. In 1946, Norman Mcqwon of the University of Chicago, came to Guatemala to establish the basic phonemes of quiché, kekchí, kanjobal, tzutuhil y xinca, and a special study of mam. His work, along with that of Watkins, allowed for the development of practical alphabets for bilingual booklets used in the literacy programs. Before these alphabets were made official, the first Escuela Normal Rural Regional was founded under the auspices of the Inter-American Foundation of Education in Chimaltenango, in the heart of the cakchiquel region, which, according to the IIN, represented the largest linguistic unit and met the required conditions for the success of this first educational experiment.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>157</sup>Previendo la terminación del contrato de Watkins en agosto de 1947, hubo de solicitársele al Departamento de Estado, por medio de la Embajada de los Estados Unidos, la renovación de dicho contrato. Watkins rindió su informe sobre el estudio del cakchiquel en septiembre de 1947 tras haber visitado 38 pueblos de los departamentos de Solóla, Chimaltenango, Sacatepéquez y Guatemala de los cuales se obtuvieron datos en 36 de ellos. Con esos datos se elaboraron alfabetos que sirvieron al Consejo Técnico de Educación Nacional para la elaboración de las cartillas bilingües utilizadas en los programas de alfabetización. “Alfabetización indígena”, BII, v. II, n.2, marzo de 1947 p. 48. Estudiaron para este “primer experimento educativo” todos los (38) municipios del centro del país (Guatemala, Chimaltenango, Sacatepequez, Sololá). Se clasificó en esta región cakchiquel a la población por grupo étnico y ubicación y se elaboró un informe completo sobre la población escolar, número de escuelas y maestros en servicio. Para este “primer experimento educativo” se establecieron seis condiciones. La tercera de ellas decía: “La comunidad propuesta debe estar próxima a un camino carretero de primer orden, para que todo viajero, al despertar su curiosidad, pueda visitar tal escuela y darse cuenta de la labor que realiza”. (...) Para obtener el máximo resultado de una cooperación eficaz con la comunidad propuesta, deberá asegurarse la simpatía de los habitantes prominentes de la localidad hacia la nueva escuela. (...) El sitio a elegirse no debe distar mucho de la Capital a fin de que la nueva escuela normal rural regional pueda estar en estrecho contacto con el ministerio del ramo. Debido a la orientación suministrada al Instituto por la Fundación Interamericana de Educación, se resolvió estudiar la región de habla cakchiquel. Luego, por decisión de la Fundación, en la escuela Pre-normal con el propósito de preparar alumnos que más tarde podían ser considerados aptos para ingresar a la Escuela Normal Regional de “La Alameda” mediante un examen vocacional y otro científico. En 1946 se fundó la Escuela Normal Rural Regional de “La Alameda” en el municipio de Chimaltenango, Chimaltenango. Posteriormente se creó una similar en la zona central de la región quiché, en la aldea Chotecaj del municipio de Totonicapán, Totonicapán. BIIN, v. II, n. 2-3, marzo-junio – 1946, pp. 54-55

With the objective of avoiding "las irregularidades, desórdenes y confusiones que han confrontado otros países al no adoptar en forma oficial un alfabeto determinado para escribir las lenguas indígenas", the IIN decided to organize a Congress of Linguists as was proposed during the convention of Indian teachers that was held in Cobán in 1945.<sup>158</sup> That Congress would openly debate the objective of recommending the best possible alphabet for written indigenous languages<sup>159</sup>.

A document about the role of indigenous languages in Latin America, presented in a UNESCO meeting in Paris, Francia, in 1951, stated that: "Después de México, Guatemala es el país más avanzado en el desarrollo de una política de revalorización del pueblo indígena"<sup>160</sup>. As a result of the officialization of indigenous languages alphabets, the

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<sup>158</sup> "Congreso Lingüístico", BI, v. X, n. 1, marzo de 1950, pp. 58-60. Según Juan Comas, distintos organismos internacionales estaban convencidos de que la integración de los indígenas a las respectivas nacionalidades de sus Estados no era obstáculo para la conservación de su idioma. Entre ellos: II Conferencia Interamericana de Educación (Santiago de Chile, 1934); VII Congreso Científico Americana (México, 1937) I, II, III, IV y V Congreso Indigenistas Interamericanos celebrados en Cuzcos, 1949; La Paz. 1954 México (1940): Cuzco (1949); La Paz (1954), Guatemala (1959) y Quito (1964).

<sup>159</sup> Bajo el patrocinio del Ministerio y con el apoyo económico del Comité Nacional de Alfabetización se reunieron en la capital guatemalteca cuarenta y seis personas y especialistas, hablantes de lenguas indígenas en el primer Congreso de Lingüistas realizado en toda la historia del país. Con los resultados obtenidos durante las sesiones celebradas del 21 al 26 de noviembre de 1949 se elaboraron los alfabetos necesarios para la oficialización de la escritura del cakchiquel, mam, quiché, tzutuhil, kanjobal, jacalteco, aguacateco, chuj, kekchí, pocomchí, chortí y pocomam oriental y central que fueron las lenguas con representación en el Congreso. Watkins y McQuwon tuvieron destacada participación en el evento e incluso se hizo un reconocimiento especial a sus trabajos. El Instituto hizo las pruebas y experimentos necesarios para decidir el alfabeto que debería usarse en la escritura oficial de las cuatro lenguas indígenas mayoritarias: quiché, cakchiquel, mam y kekchí, y que fue oficializado por el gobierno de la república en agosto de 1950. Este primer paso en el camino de la alfabetización en lenguas indígenas beneficiaría al 85.4% de la población nacional, según el censo de 1940, integrada por hablantes de 20 idiomas nativos cuyo léxico estaba recopilando el IIN. Para utilizarse en lecturas post-alfabetización el IIN trasladó al nuevo alfabeto oficial quiché la copia fiel del baile drama del "tun" o "Rabinal Achí" escrito con un alfabeto viejo, en la versión quiché de Brasseur de Bourbourg y el propósito final era "restaurar este notable baile indígena en el pueblo de Rabinal" "Informe del Instituto Indigenista Nacional: 1950", BI, v. XI, n. 1, marzo de 1951.

<sup>160</sup> "Dado el número de lenguas vivas en Guatemala", destacaba el documento, se hacía necesario un Congreso de Lingüistas, que recomendó seleccionar la región lingüística que ofreciera mayores ventajas para el experimento de emplear la lengua materna como instrumento educativo. Posteriormente debería levantarse un censo de maestros bilingües encargados de la implantación del nuevo sistema y estudiarse "cuidadosamente las condiciones especiales de la región elegida. Así será mínimo el peligro de un fracaso", advertía el autor (Ibid.) BI, v. XII, n. 2, junio de 1952, p. 96. Tomado de Valcárcel, Luis, "Teaching in indian languages in Central and South America", regional paper on vernacular languages, n. 16 for meeting of experts, UNESCO, París, 15 nov. to 5 dec. 1951, 41 p. Es importante recordar que del 30 de junio al 3 de julio de 1947, Goubaud Carrera asistió a la sede de la UNESCO en París, a una reunión de expertos encargados de estudiar los problemas que el lenguaje representa en la *educación fundamental*. Los temas versaron sobre "La lengua Materna", "El Alfabetismo", las técnicas para las campañas de alfabetización en lengua materna, entre otros. El

director presentó un informe a la reunión sobre las labores que con relación a la identificación y distribución geográfica de los idiomas indígenas de Guatemala había efectuado el Instituto Indigenista Nacional (Boletines IIN, t. I n. 2, 3, y 4) así como del estudio detallado que se que se había hecho del cakchiquel para realizar la cartilla elemental para adultos que se planea publicar. ("Trayectoria del Instituto BIIN II, n. 3-4, junio-septiembre de 1947, p. 122. Otros reconocimientos a la

government decided to carry out a census of bilingual teachers in rural areas and a survey in all municipalities in the four main linguistic areas<sup>161</sup>. The census and the survey would help the Institute choose places with the best conditions for the implementation of literacy programs in indigenous languages<sup>162</sup>.

## **The Summer Linguistics Institute (SLI)**

The SLI and other US institutions and professionals worked in Guatemala before 1944<sup>163</sup>. Under the Arbenz government, the IIN requested the assistance of the SLI for the

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reforma educativa guatemalteca se registraron en distintas latitudes. Por ejemplo, el Congreso Iberoamericano de Educación, convocado por la UNESCO y reunido en Montevideo, Uruguay en 1950, a través de una resolución, recomendó a todas las instituciones educativas del Continente la construcción de escuelas tipo federal semejantes a las creadas en Guatemala. "Esto fue un reconocimiento importante al programa educativo del gobierno arevalista". (Ordoñez 1951:46)

<sup>161</sup>Se hizo un estudio estadístico sobre la situación lingüística de 94 comunidades que incluyó el censo de hablantes de español y lenguas nativas por sexo y edad. En 1950, año cero de la alfabetización bilingüe, se acordó asimismo capacitar maestros alfabetizadores para que conocieran algunas nociones acerca de la fonética de las lenguas indígenas y el uso de su alfabeto escrito. La ejecución de estas tareas y la determinación de la unidad lingüística de la región seleccionada para iniciar la campaña de alfabetización fue el principal aporte del IIN. Finalmente se eligió la región kekchí, la de más alto monolingüismo en el país. El IIN presentó en 1951 su "plan de trabajos iniciales de la primera campaña de alfabetización en lenguas indígenas". Se realizó además el estudio para seleccionar la región adecuada al diseño de la primera campaña de alfabetización, en cooperación con el CNA y con la colaboración del ILV arrancó en 1953 la alfabetización en seis aldeas de la región kekchí. Este experimento, el primero en su género realizado por un gobierno guatemalteco concluyó en febrero de 1954 y sirvió para ajustar el alfabeto de la cartilla bilingüe y los textos utilizados para alfabetizar a los kekchís. Los resultados finales de este programa debían conocerse en 1955. Una campaña de alfabetización más pequeña, también de naturaleza experimental se desarrolló en 1954 en los municipios de Patzún y Santa Cruz Balanyá, zona cakchiquel en la que igualmente participó el ILV. Incluso una de las dos cartillas utilizadas fue elaborada por William Cameron Townsend quien conocía la región desde 1917.

<sup>162</sup> Simultáneamente a partir de 1951 y hasta 1954 se realizó una encuesta en la zona quiché para detectar el nivel de bilingüismo entre la población. Joaquín Noval, director del IIN al momento de la contrarrevolución de 1954, desestimó los logros de la campaña de alfabetización bilingüe en la región kekchí; al compararla con un proyecto similar desarrollado por el ILV en otras zonas del país. En 1958 Noval escribió: "El ensayo de alfabetización bilingüe para indígenas monolingües que llevaron a cabo el Instituto Indigenista Nacional y el Departamento de Alfabetización Nacional en la región kekchí rindió resultados tan bajos que podrían hacer temer que un programa en mayor escala fuese prohibitivo por los costos. Sin embargo, este programa aun no ha sido evaluado y hay alguna base para pensar que su aparente fracaso se debió a los errores cometidos en su aplicación, más que a cualquier otro factor. Otros experimentos - dice Noval- como los realizados por Harry Mc Arthur -del ILV- en Aguacatán, no han sido evaluados en forma definitiva, aunque su tendencia al buen éxito ya se ha puesto de manifiesto. Quizá haya algunos ensayos más en esta misma categoría. Harry Mc Arthur y la señora Mc Arthur estimaron que bastan tres meses, trabajando dos horas diarias durante cinco días a la semana, para enseñar a leer y escribir a un grupo de personas adultas, de ambos sexos en lengua aguacateca. Pero advirtieron que esta es una estimación tentativa que debe ser ponderada para fines prácticos". (Noval 1959:23-24)

<sup>163</sup> Otros llegaron bajo el gobierno de Arévalo y otros más durante la presidencia de Arbenz y un numeroso grupo siguió trabajando a partir del golpe de 1954. Cameron Townsend, fundador del ILV, había llegado a Guatemala a principios de siglo y de acuerdo a Clarence Hall, editor ejecutivo del Reader's Digest: "Desde tiempos tempranos, Cam Townsend desarrolló su necesidad de predicar el Santo Evangelio. Allá por 1917, cuando tenía 21 años, dejó el "Occidental College" en Los Angeles, empacó sus maletas con Biblias en inglés-español y se fue a Guatemala. Pronto encontró que sus Biblias eran inútiles. Más de dos tercios de la población eran indios: Pocos sabían español y menos todavía mostraban algún interés en aprenderlo. Un día, un individuo a quien Cam había ofrecido un ejemplar de la Biblia preguntó ¿"Por qué si su

design and execution of literacy programs. In 1952, the SLI, in affiliation with the University of Oklahoma, began an analysis of indigenous languages "con el deseo de servir al gobierno y a la población indígena de Guatemala"<sup>164</sup>. In order to support the literacy programs, the goals of the SLI were: to learn indigenous languages, reduce the number of non-written languages, develop written systems, write a careful analysis of the grammar and syntax of each language, and to create dictionaries, grammars, booklets and reading material in each language<sup>165</sup>. The literacy campaigns had not yet begun, when the authorities were already busy spreading a civic spirit to invigorate the nationalist modernization and Arevalo's "spiritual socialism"<sup>166</sup>. In accord with this new spirit, the

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Dios es tan listo, no ha aprendido nuestro idioma?" En ese mismo momento Townsend dejó de distribuir Biblias, en un intento de darle a Dios otra lengua. Durante los siguientes 15 años vivió con la primitiva tribu de los kakchiqueles de Guatemala, comiendo su comida (un solo artículo dietético; hormigas tostadas), aumentando su dominio de la lengua y transcribiéndola gradualmente. Lenta y laboriosamente desarrolló un método simplificado para enseñar cualquier lengua fonéticamente escrita. Cuando finalmente en 1932, extenuado por la tuberculosis, Townsend regresó en lomo de mula a la civilización, dejó a los indios kakchiqueles con cinco escuelas, un pequeño hospital, una imprenta, numerosas pequeñas iglesias y cientos de alfabetizados convertidos al cristianismo. En el espíritu de Cam Townsend había exaltación; en sus alforjas había un ejemplar impreso, en la hasta entonces nunca escrita lengua kakchikel, de todo el Nuevo Testamento". (Cit. pos. Rus y Wasserstrom 1973). En México Townsend se entrevistó con Moisés Sáenz, presbiteriano, subsecretario de Educación Pública, antropólogo y político liberal quien visitó Panajachel en donde Townsend le mostró parte del trabajo ya realizado, mismo que Sáenz, particularmente lo relativo a la alfabetización bilingüe, quiso aplicar a México. En 1936 el equipo del ya constituido ILV decidió iniciar el estudio de las lenguas de México luego de su preparación en territorio guatemalteco. Escribe Hall: "Townsend y sus estudiantes se dirigieron a México. Fueron detenidos en la frontera diciéndoles terminantemente: "Nosotros no queremos traductores. Las lenguas indígenas deben desaparecer", Townsend respondió; 'Desaparecerán más pronto si usan las lenguas de los indios para enseñarles español'." (Rus y Wasserstrom 1979:143-144)

<sup>164</sup> Rus y Wasserstrom destacan la facilidad con que el ILV encontró puntos de coincidencia con la burocracia indigenista y logró proteger, principalmente a partir de la fundación del INI en 1948, el proyecto de sembrar en las comunidades indígenas una semilla que trajo consecuencias ideológicas y políticas, cuyo conocimiento es en la actualidad insuficiente. Las observaciones de ambos autores son válidas en sentido general para el caso guatemalteco pero debe tenerse en cuenta el marco contrainsurgente en que se ha desarrollado el trabajo de varias sectas fundamentalistas, principalmente a partir de la cruzada evangélica estimulada por la legada al poder, vía golpe de Estado, del general Efraín Ríos Montt, en 1982, año de la muerte de Townsend.

<sup>165</sup> En noviembre de 1953, el ministro de Educación pidió ayuda al ILV para resolver algunos problemas lingüísticos en la formulación del alfabeto definitivo del kekchí. Ethel Wallis, traductora de la Biblia, visitó la región del proyecto a cargo de Juan de Dios Rosales que contaba con el apoyo de dos orientadores y seis maestros bilingües trabajando en seis centros de prueba, dos en San Pedro Carchá, dos en Cobán y dos en San Juan Chamelco. Para 1956, el ILV mantenía un equipo de 16 investigadores norteamericanos y canadienses, bajo la dirección de Earl P. Adams. Un informe elaborado por Harry S. Mc Arthur, sobre las actividades realizadas en 1956 decía: "Aun cuando el análisis lingüístico es la principal ocupación de los miembros del Instituto, gran cantidad de tiempo ha sido empleado en el trabajo de alfabetización y muchos otros medios se han encontrado para ayudar al indígena". "Con estos medios y muchos otros –escribió MacArthur– nuestros investigadores lingüistas se han vuelto miembros colaboradores en cada una de sus comunidades, ganando así la confianza y amistad de la gente. Esta confianza lleva a la pronta aceptación de las cartillas y ayuda a la alfabetización que ha sido preparada para ayudar al indígena a reintegrarse a la vida nacional" (Ibid. p. 148). "El Instituto Lingüístico de Verano en Guatemala: 1956" por Harry S. Mc Arthur, BI, v. XVIII, n. 1-4, 1957, p. 146.

<sup>166</sup> La urgencia por fomentar la conciencia cívica, de unidad nacional, llevaron a suspender la traducción de la Constitución de la República a las lenguas indígenas kakchikel, mam y kekchí iniciada en 1949 y hacer lo propio con una

IIN translated the *Carta Fundamental de los Derechos del Hombre* and the *Constitución de la República*, among other documents, that would help with the development of citizenship<sup>167</sup>.

## Economy and Integration

The evaluation of the standard of living of indigenous population included a nutritional study directed by Goubaud Carrera<sup>168</sup>. During almost ten years, the IIN

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glosa especial de la Constitución que se tituló "Derechos y Obligaciones de los Guatemaltecos". No se abandonaría sin embargo, la traducción formal de la Constitución pero se esperarían conocer los resultados de la divulgación de esta glosa para decidir si se conservaban o si se eliminaban los títulos y el articulado en lenguas indígenas que se había previsto incluir en la edición castellana de la Carta Magna. Para marzo de 1949, el IIN ya había traducido el Himno Nacional al cakchiquel, mam, kekchí y quiché "con el objeto de enseñar a los indígenas alfabetizados en sus lenguas maternas el contenido cívico de este instrumento nacional" (Ibid. p. 150). En 1966 se publicó un estudio sobre 13 lenguas indígenas de Guatemala realizado por el ILV a solicitud del Seminario de Integración Social Guatemalteca "Los autores son lingüistas y misioneros preparados lingüísticamente, interesados en la traducción de la Biblia a la lengua de el Diario de Centro América, para junio de 1985, el ILV contaba con una casa editorial, un centro de computación y un centro de investigaciones en donde trabajaban 177 personas, 130 de las cuales son extranjeras" Hernández (1950).

<sup>167</sup> Antes de la oficialización de las lenguas, se tradujo además del himno, un decreto sobre protección a los textiles, cuatro películas sobre sanidad e higiene y se principió a traducir el Código de Trabajo. Hay que recordar que los guatemaltecos estrenaron Constitución en 1945 en la cual se consignó de manera explícita la condición indígena de la mayor parte de los ciudadanos y se declaró el propósito de garantizar la reproducción de sus mecanismos de identidad. El Indigenista tradujo también "en forma íntegra y ajustada" el polémico decreto 900, Ley de Reforma Agraria, que fue el pretexto del gobierno norteamericano para incrementar sus presiones y derrocar al gobierno arbencista en 1954. El IIN apoyó asimismo la traducción de propaganda electoral, manuales de orientación agrícola y sanitaria. Realizó grabaciones de documentos de diversas temáticas para ser transmitidos en la radio. Se trabajó también en traducciones y revisión de textos en lenguas indígenas para ser usados por radiodifusoras nacionales en los programas destinados a la población indígena monolingüe y se preparó la propaganda usada en el Censo de 1950 en quiché, cakchiquel y mam.

<sup>168</sup> Este estudio se realizó con los auspicios de la Institución Carnegie y fue concebido a fines de 1942 por el doctor Alfred V. Kikker, jefe de la sección histórica de la Carnegie, bajo cuya jefatura se hacían todos los estudios. Redfield colaboró al igual que Tax, quien fue coordinador del estudio. Juan de Dios Rosales y Agustín Pop realizaron buena parte del trabajo de campo que principió en septiembre de 1943 y concluyó en enero de 1945. El análisis estadístico tardó un año (de marzo de 1945 a marzo de 1946) y fue realizado por Margarita Carrera de Molina y Julia Stella Santizo. En la carta de presentación de este estudio a las familias guatemaltecas se leía "Institución Carnegie de Washington, Guatemala, C.A.". "Estudio de Alimentación", y se explicaba a los vecinos que "esta colaboración significa (sic) el suministrar los datos de los alimentos consumidos por todos y cada uno de los miembros de su familia, por el término de siete días, o más si es posible. El estudio -proseguía la presentación de la encuesta- comprende tres cosas, a saber: primero, conocer los artículos alimenticios que se consumen en el seno de su familia; segundo, la forma como se consumen, o sea la manera de preparar estos alimentos; y tercero, las cantidades de estos alimentos consumidos por los diferentes miembros de la familia. Estos datos suministrados nos permitirán poder hacer estudios posteriores del valor nutritivo de las sustancias consumidas. Anticipadamente le agradecemos a usted su colaboración en este estudio cuyo objeto es un fin científico que proyectará beneficios futuros para la nación guatemalteca". Para marzo de 1948 Emma Reh de la Organización de Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura había terminado, el análisis cualitativo de los datos sobre el consumo alimenticio en once poblaciones. Al INFOP se le enviaron resultados de este estudio que incluyó cuadros estadísticos detallados del costo de alimentación en seis de las once comunidades investigadas. Cuando aún no se conocía el análisis final, el IIN informó: "se puede anticipar la consideración general de que en algunas comunidades indígenas la alimentación es, por su carácter nutritivo, mejor de lo que se había supuesto anteriormente, quedando sin embargo en pie el problema de las enfermedades que atacan al indígena y que destruyen los efectos que pudiera tener la ingestión de alimentos adecuados a una dieta nutritiva". "Informe del Instituto Indigenista Nacional: 1949", BI, v. X, n. 1, marzo de 1950.



conducted more than 100 socio-economic studies at the request of governmental and international agencies<sup>169</sup>. The corresponding studies of the cakchiquel region were given to Benjamín Paul<sup>170</sup>, professor at Harvard University and at the Escuela Normal Rural Regional "La Alameda". Over the course of several years, he pulled together all the information that had been collected by IIN technicians<sup>171</sup>. The overall goal was to improve housing, hygiene, levels of income, social organization and public education. To facilitate information gathering, the Institute developed a "sociological guide" on twelve different aspects of life in the communities, including the black villages in Guatemala's Atlantic Coast<sup>172</sup>. Based on questionnaires sent to the municipalities, a study was conducted to

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<sup>169</sup> El Instituto de Fomento de la Producción, (INFOP), el Consejo de Planificación Económica, el Banco de Guatemala y otras instancias encargadas del diseño de la política económica de los gobiernos arealista y arbencista se apoyaron en los estudios realizados por los investigadores del IIN. Entre los organismos en los que el IIN tuvo una participación en proyectos conjuntos pueden mencionarse los siguientes: Dirección Nacional de Estadística, Comité Nacional de Alfabetización Instituto Nacional de Fomento a la Producción, Departamento de Educación Rural, Servicio Cooperativo Interamericano de Educación, Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología, Comisión Nacional de UNESCO, OIT, FAO, Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social, Universidad de San Carlos, Dirección General de Turismo y un sinnúmero de instituciones que tenían proyectos dirigidos a la población indígena. El objeto de las monografías y estudios socioeconómicos, una buena parte de los cuales continúa inédita, fue dotar al gobierno de bases sólidas para el desarrollo de sus programas.

<sup>170</sup> BIIN, v. I-II, 1945-1947, 2ª. ed., 1958, pp. 27-43. 37. "Instituto Indigenista nacional: 1948", BI, v. IX, n. 1, marzo de 1949, p. 56. 38. Benjamín Paul, miembro del Servicio Cooperativo Interamericano de Educación y profesor de Ciencias Sociales en la Universidad de Harvard y en "La Alameda", trabajó en San Pedro la Laguna a solicitud de Tax y de Redfield para verificar la información recogida por Rosales. A partir de 1947 participó en la elaboración de una Guía Sociológica para investigaciones de campo. Esta guía se preparó para resolverse, según el IIN, en un espacio de ocho a diez días. Incluyó los siguientes aspectos: "Ecología, vivienda, mueblaje, vestimenta, agricultura, industrias, ocupaciones, organización social, estructura, y el ciclo de la vida individual. Cfr. "Guía Sociológica: investigaciones de campo de las comunidades indígenas guatemaltecas", Esta guía se preparó para resolverse, según el IIN, en un espacio de ocho a diez días. Incluyó los siguientes aspectos: "Ecología, vivienda, mueblaje, vestimenta, agricultura, industrias, ocupaciones, organización social, estructura, y el ciclo de la vida individual. Cfr. "Guía Sociológica: investigaciones de campo de las comunidades indígenas guatemaltecas", BIIN, v. II, n. 2, marzo de 1947.

<sup>171</sup> BIIN, v. I-II, 1945-1947, 2ª. ed., 1958, pp. 27-43. 37. Instituto Indigenista nacional: 1948", BI, v. IX, n. 1, marzo de 1949, p. 56. 38. Benjamín Paul, miembro del Servicio Cooperativo Interamericano de Educación, trabajó en San Pedro la Laguna a solicitud de Tax y de Redfield para verificar la información recogida por Rosales. A partir de 1947 participó en la elaboración de una Guía Sociológica para investigaciones de campo. Esta guía se preparó para resolverse, según el IIN, en un espacio de ocho a diez días. Incluyó los siguientes aspectos: "Ecología, vivienda, mueblaje, vestimenta, agricultura, industrias, ocupaciones, organización social, estructura, y el ciclo de la vida individual. Cfr. "Guía Sociológica: investigaciones de campo de las comunidades indígenas guatemaltecas", BIIN, v. II, n. 2, marzo de 1947 y en "Instituto Indigenista nacional: 1948", BI, v. IX, n. 1, marzo de 1949, p. 56.

<sup>172</sup> En 1946 se enviaron encuestas a todas las municipalidades del país para conocer los aspectos económicos y sociales de las fiestas titulares y regionales. Se continuaron los trabajos de dietética indígena iniciados en 1943 y 1945 y dentro del renglón de estudios socioeconómicos y a petición del INFOP se hicieron estudios sobre las industrias indígenas, entre ellas las de la lana. Además se investigaron las condiciones de trabajo, la función de los "principales" y el uso y características de los trajes indígenas. Posteriormente y éste fue uno de los pocos estudios que tuvieron continuidad después de la contrarrevolución de 1954, se investigó la distribución anual del tiempo en un elevado número de comunidades del altiplano con el propósito de examinar las tasas de productividad y asimismo el espacio y usos del "tiempo libre" que en su oportunidad pudiera ser aprovechable en bien de la *integración* y la educación política. Se

define “los criterios que caracterizan al grupo étnico”. The reliability of surveys and questionnaires, as can be imagined, was minimal. However, given the financial restrictions and the inaccessibility of many of the villages, very often the results were outdated or inaccurate<sup>173</sup>.

Another significant aspect of the indigenista program was the valorization of indigenous weaving. Still under Ubico dictatorship, there was a great demand in the US for “objetos típicos” from Guatemala. The artistic skill involved in indigenous people’s manufacturing of their own clothing has attracted the attention of locals and foreigners since colonial times. Even when linguistic studies were not yet in vogue, there were already informed reports about indigenous weaving<sup>174</sup>. Often incorporating crafts into civic and

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enviaron encuestas a un total de 311 mercados de los cuales respondieron 301, en donde se solicitaba ofrecer información sobre el número, distribución geográfica, lugares especiales en que se celebran, frecuencias, días, horas, productos que se venden y región que abarcan los distintos mercados que se conocen en el país.

<sup>173</sup> De las pocas monografías que pudieron publicarse la mayoría fue editada con apoyo del SCIDE. De todos los estudios especiales, los de crédito rural y sobre los ingresos promedio de las familias indígenas absorbieron una parte importante de la atención de los investigadores técnicos. A petición de el INFOP y con el apoyo de FAO se realizó un estudio de las modalidades de crédito rural en 36 comunidades del cual surgió un documento que sirvió para elaborar un sistema de crédito rural. El experimento de promoción a las mejoras económicas, tuvo visos de adquirir mayores perspectivas en lo que se refiere a la producción textil. Por ser una industria doméstica y artesanal con un mercado de consumo fijo y en posibilidad de crecer principalmente en los años de la guerra y posguerra, este fue uno de los rubros productivos a los se le dedicó mayor atención. Desde agosto de 1947 se planteó la posibilidad de elaborar un registro pictórico de trajes y tejidos indígenas que se denominaría “Arco Iris Guatemalteco”, con base a las fotografías obtenidas en las 250 comunidades “que poseen todavía trajes propios”. Se estimó que se necesitarían 1,000 fotografías a color y 3,000 en blanco y negro, material fotográfico que sería recolectado luego de uno o dos años de trabajo de campo. El proyecto, según parece, nunca se materializó. Es evidente que el IIN no realizó en esta década una investigación de carácter etnológico que abordase las particularidades simbólicas de los diseños o el sustrato cosmogónico y sociocultural de la producción textil. Tal actividad ya había sido iniciada por otros investigadores y el Instituto se concretó a ratificar lineamientos que el IIN había recogido en el resto de los países del continente en materia aduanera y de intercambio de experiencias técnicas. Incluso, dos maestros tejedores del Ecuador estuvieron en Guatemala enseñando la fabricación de alfombras de lana en varias comunidades del altiplano. Además, el Instituto se ocupó de ir formando una colección de trajes indígenas que servía en distintas oportunidades, particularmente cuando la celebración de eventos internacionales daban oportunidad de mostrar algo de la tradición cultural del pueblo indígena guatemalteco (Ibid.) Ya en 1936, bajo los auspicios de la Institución Carnegie, la doctora Lilia O’Neal llevó a cabo una investigación de los tejidos indígenas a partir de la cual definió ocho zonas o centros de producción textil: 1. Ciudad de Guatemala y Antigua, 2. Tecpán, 3. La región del lago de Atitlán, 4. Chichicastenango, 5. Momostenango, 6. Quetzaltenango, Salcajá y Totonicapán, 7. San Pedro Sacatepéquez, San Marcos, Cobán, Salamá y Rabinal y 8. Huehuetenango. El IIN formó parte del Consejo Asesor Técnico de la Oficina Nacional Central de Turismo “con el objeto de presentarle asesoría en todo lo concerniente a los asuntos indígenas que constituyen uno de los motivos más atrayentes para el turista de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica”. En ese sentido, J. Stanton Robins, hizo varias recomendaciones al gobierno guatemalteco, entre las que se cuentan: “Debería encontrarse la manera de estimular y ayudar a los indígenas para que continúen usando sus trajes tradicionales” (...) “Si se lograra que uno de los “principales” indígenas concertara una exhibición de los productos de su pueblo en un lugar determinado para su venta, se le evitaría al turista tener que enternderse con los métodos de una venta forci voluntaria de tejidos indígenas en los pueblos circunvecinos al lago de Atitlán”. BIIN, v. II, n. 2-3, marzo-junio de 1946, pp. 5-6

public scenarios, revolutionary nationalism was nourished by the artistic vitality and aesthetic appeal of this indigenous industry. The IIN was less concerned with the anthropological study of indigenous weaving, and more interested in its commercialization<sup>175</sup>.

### ***Indigenismo and Counter-revolution***

Although Arevalo's programs did not bring a drastic redistribution of income, the political opposition to his administration reached a critical peak around 1948<sup>176</sup>. "En Guatemala no existe problema agrario –Arévalo had said- antes bien, los campesinos están psicológica y políticamente ellos, la necesidad de trabajar, pero sin perjudicar a ninguna otra clase" (Ibid.: 54)<sup>177</sup>. In his final speech before leaving office in 1951, Arevalo declared that his government had avoided at least 32 attempted coup d'Etats promoted by the United Fruit Company<sup>178</sup>. In the prestigious journal *Revista de Guatemala*, Luis Cardoza y Aragón pointed out as the main failures of the arevalista period: "Exceso de política y falta de administración"<sup>179</sup>. On November 13, 1950, Arbenz won the presidential elections with more than 65% of the 400,000 casted votes. Only 37 years old, Arbenz became the youngest president in the Americas<sup>180</sup>. In his inaugural speech, Arbenz announced: "Nuestro gobierno se propone iniciar el camino del desarrollo económico de

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<sup>175</sup> "Esta posibilidad de encontrar mercado fuera de Guatemala para los artículos típicos constituiría mediante una propaganda bien organizada -apuntaba el Boletín del III- una importante línea de exportación, con lo cual se enriquecería la economía nacional y se aliviaría la situación de la población nativa; además en esta forma -enfaticaba- el indio rehabilitaría sus antiguos prestigios y proporcionaría al país en el extranjero, el sello de su personalidad inconfundible". "Demanda norteamericana de objetos típicos guatemaltecos", BI v. III, n. 4, diciembre de 1943, p. 274. Muchas iniciativas se desprendieron a raíz del atractivo mercado para los textiles guatemaltecos. Se emitieron leyes de protección a las piezas y a sus productores, procurándose eliminar barreras aduanales y proveer facilidades crediticias. Con el fin de "proteger la calidad, producción y precio de los tejidos elaborados por los indígenas a fin de evitar mixtificaciones" el gobierno emitió el decreto 426 el 19 de septiembre de 1947. Se declaró de interés nacional su protección y se les clasificó de la siguiente manera: "a) Tejidos indígenas autóctonos, b) tejidos indígenas auténticos, y c) tejidos indígenas de Guatemala". Cada uno de los cuales, de acuerdo al nuevo decreto debería llevar etiquetas, bandas y sellos de garantía, según fuera el caso, para evitar "falsificaciones y malhechuras". La disposición fue más allá al decidir la creación de "comités para el control de los tejidos indígenas" en las distintas cabeceras municipales o comunidades que se ocuparan en esa industria. Asimismo se inició la recolección de los diseños con el propósito de registrarlos y clasificarlos. Oportunamente se entregaban en cada comunidad las etiquetas correspondientes que deberían ir adheridas a las piezas como certificado de garantía.

Guatemala, tendiendo hacia los tres objetivos fundamentales siguientes: A convertir nuestro país de una nación dependiente y de economía semi-colonial en un país atrasado

<sup>176</sup> A fines de ese año, se encontró un cargamento de armas en la terminal ferroviaria propiedad de la United Fruit Company (UFCO), situada en el único puerto sobre el Atlántico guatemalteco, propiedad de la misma compañía y poco después un grupo de exiliados realizó un frustrado intento de invasión. Entre junio de 1948 y marzo de 1949 se produjeron huelgas, paros laborales y protestas de los trabajadores en contra de la Compañía. Pese a que Arévalo no tomó disposición alguna que afectara significativamente a la estructura agraria del país, desde el principio los cambios en la legislación laboral fueron cuestionados por la Frutera y por una reducida élite de militares, religiosos y finqueros de mentalidad conservadora. La Frutera explotaba desde 1902 territorio y trabajadores guatemaltecos y siempre gozó del favor de los gobiernos en turno. En 1936 firmó un convenio por 99 años con el general Ubico para abrir una segunda plantación en la costa sur guatemalteca, que al igual de la existente en la costa norte, vino acompañada con las concesiones acostumbradas: exención total de impuestos de todos los bienes necesarios y garantía de salarios bajos, entre otras prebendas. Ubico insistió en que los trabajadores recibieran una paga diaria no mayor de 50 centavos de dólar para impedir que otros trabajadores guatemaltecos exigieran un salario mejor. Por esa fecha la UFCO tomó posesión de la International Railways of Central America, dueña de Puerto Barrios, el único puerto en el Atlántico y de 1,500 kilómetros de líneas férreas, casi todas las del país. Además controlaba los teléfonos y los telégrafos y cerca de 40 mil empleos. “Funcionaba como un estado dentro de un estado”. Schlesinger y Kinzer (1982:26).

<sup>177</sup> El gobierno había hecho un esfuerzo por registrar oficialmente todas las tierras y legalizar los títulos de campesinos que antes no habían sido reconocidos. En diciembre de 1949, el Congreso aprobó una Ley de Arrendamientos Forzosos que a pesar de su reducida escala, fue probablemente la más importante de las limitadas medidas agrarias tomadas bajo el gobierno de Arévalo. Esta ley permitía a cualquier campesino que poseyera menos de una hectárea solicitar el derecho de rentar la extensión ociosa a los propietarios de las plantaciones cercanas. Por otro lado, empezó a distribuirse paulatinamente la tierra confiscada a los alemanes que constituía una tercera parte de la superficie del país y entraba dentro del rubro “finca nacionales”. Sin embargo, no se registraron nuevas confiscaciones aunque la Constitución si las permitía.

<sup>178</sup> “Hacia 1949 era ya notable el grado de polarización de las distintas fuerzas y podía percibirse la inminencia de conflictos decisivos. Tuvo lugar entonces un alzamiento militar tras conocerse que el coronel Javier Arana, había muerto en la balacera que tuvo lugar al procederse a su captura el 18 de julio. La noche anterior Arana había presentado un ultimátum al presidente Arévalo y estaba por consumarse un golpe de Estado”. (Guerra 1988:30) Después de 36 horas, Arbenz, ministro de la Defensa de Arévalo, logró aplastar la rebelión y en noviembre de 1950, nuevamente Arbenz y Arévalo sofocó la trigésima intentona de golpe de Estado, conducida esta vez por el teniente coronel Carlos Castillo Armas, conocido popularmente como “Cara de Hacha”. “El desenlace que tuvo aquella confrontación significó un golpe muy severo para los sectores más conservadores, las empresas extranjeras y la embajada norteamericana. No es extraño, en consecuencia, que tan pronto el gobierno dominó la situación, el embajador norteamericano, Richard Patterson, entrevistara a Arbenz. El embajador le dijo a éste que reconocía en él al “nuevo hombre fuerte” de Guatemala y le propuso abiertamente que derrocará al presidente Arévalo, a cambio de lo cual ponía a disposición del gobierno de facto la suma de cien millones de dólares”. (Ibid.) Arbenz informó a Arévalo acerca del asunto y no se supo de solicitud alguna de parte del gobierno guatemalteco para el retiro del embajador. Patterson abandonó apresuradamente el país. Pasarían varios meses antes que los Estados Unidos mandaran un nuevo embajador.

<sup>179</sup> El análisis de Cardoza presenta un panorama bastante completo del trabajo realizado entre 1945 y 1951. Luego de reconocer importantes logros en el campo laboral y político, algunos de los cuales hemos mencionado aquí, el análisis apunta que “sin embargo, en el campo, la situación ha permanecido casi intacta. Y en Guatemala, el campo lo es todo. El paso próximo corresponde a tal necesidad ineludible. No es solo una exigencia de las masas campesinas, de la economía guatemalteca en general, sino de la historia misma. hemos repetido, más de una vez, el juicio que se atribuye al general Lázaro Cárdenas sobre la revolución guatemalteca: Es una revolución urbana en un país agrario. En menos palabras –dice Cardoza- no puede concretarse, de modo más exacto y genial, la realidad y nuestra ruta”. “El gobierno del presidente Juan José Arévalo, apuntes para un balance” en *Revista de Guatemala* 1 (1), 1951, 2ª. Época. p. 17. Ibid. p. 35-36. Sobre Arévalo como expresidente son muchas y controvertidas las opiniones que se han pronunciado. En su libro *Violencia y Enajenación*, Galeano (1971:77-81) en el capítulo titulado “La sardina al servicio del tiburón”, critica el papel desempeñado por Arévalo cuando aceptó ser embajador del gobierno del general Carlos Manuel Arana Osorio (1970-1974). Dice Cardoza: “Augusto Pinochet recibió, lo mismo que Juan José Arévalo, el Gran Collar de la Orden del Quetzal, Arévalo no lo devolvió, Llevan el mismo collar” (1986:734). Visitó a Somoza, elogió la invasión a Cuba durante la presidencia de Kennedy. “Cuando la sardina es roja, la fábula cambia”, dijo parafraseando el título de una de sus más importantes obras (Arévalo 1960).

<sup>180</sup> Arbenz nació en Quetzaltenango, la segunda ciudad de país, hijo de un inmigrante suizo farmacéutico que fracasó en sus negocios, abandonó a la familia y luego se suicidó. Otro suizo consiguió que el general Ubico le concediera una beca para estudiar en la Escuela Politécnica de donde egresó con los más altos honores. En 1939 se casó con María Cristina Vilanova, hija de un rico cafetalero salvadoreño.

económicamente independiente; a convertir a Guatemala de país atrasado y de economía predominantemente semifeudal en un país moderno y capitalista<sup>181</sup>; y hacer que esta transformación se lleve a cabo en forma que traiga consigo la mayor elevación posible del nivel de vida de las grandes masas del pueblo”.<sup>182</sup>

It is important to recall that during his presidential campaign, Dwight Eisenhower had attacked Harry Truman’s foreign policy because he considered it “too soft on communism”. John Foster Dulles, the tentative new Secretary of State, used to comment in private that Republicans “would push back the Iron Curtain in East Europe”. His brother

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<sup>181</sup> En octubre de 1951, justamente siete meses después de haber tomado posesión, Walter Turnbull, un alto ejecutivo de la UFCO, llegó desde Boston para entrevistarse con Arbenz y exigirle la ampliación del contrato. Arbenz respondió que la compañía tendría que comprometerse a respetar las leyes y la Constitución de la República. Además, propuso que se mejoran los muelles de Puerto Barrios, se redujeran las tarifas de carga del ferrocarril, las más altas del mundo según el Banco Internacional de Desarrollo, se pagaran derechos de exportación y que la UFCO empezara a pensar en pagar una compensación por el empobrecimiento de las tierras. La compañía consideró un ataque frontal y una falta de gratitud estas proposiciones y respondió despidiendo a 4 mil trabajadores. Nadie podía negar que la Frutera había sacado de Guatemala ganancias que excedían en mucho el monto de lo invertido. Entre 1942 y 1952 aumentó sus activos en un 133.8% y pagó a los accionistas casi 62 centavos por cada dólar invertido. “Era -recordaba el consultor de relaciones públicas de la compañía, Edward Bernays- un negocio muy productivo” especialmente porque “la compañía era dirigida como un gobierno privado” (Ibid.)

<sup>182</sup> *Discurso del presidente Jacobo Arbenz al asumir la presidencia de la república*, Guatemala, Tipografía Nacional, 1951. Durante su primer año, Arbenz dedicó la mayor parte de su atención a conseguir la aprobación de una ley de reforma agraria. Desde octubre de 1946, el Segundo Congreso de la Confederación de Trabajadores de Guatemala, había sido el primero en demandar la reforma agraria. Posteriormente, los partidos políticos del gobierno, en forma más o menos imprecisa la asumieron como una de sus demandas programáticas. A partir de 1950, la Confederación Nacional Campesina la incluyó en su programa. Las ambigüedades concluyeron en 1952 con el decreto 900. Según Guerra Borges, “Arbenz hubiera podido llegar al final de su período presidencial sin perder popularidad, aplicado tan solo la legislación de arrendamiento forzoso” (Guerra op. cit.:33). De enero de 1953 a junio de 1954 la reforma agraria benefició entre el 31 y el 40% de los campesinos y trabajadores agrícolas sin tierra. En marzo de 1953, “el hacha de la reforma agraria cayó sobre la compañía” (Schlesinger y Kinzer op. cit.:87). En dos decretos independientes el gobierno expropió 85 mil has. de tierra no cultivada en las plantaciones de la UFCO en Tiquisate. La Frutera no usaba el 85% de la tierra y alegaba que la necesitaba como reserva para enfrentar las enfermedades de los plataneros. El gobierno ofreció 627, 572 dólares en bonos por las tierras, basándose en el valor declarado por la compañía. El Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos, cuyos altos funcionarios mantenían vínculos con la Frutera, protestaron el 20 de abril ante el gobierno guatemalteco exigiendo 15, 854, 849 dólares, lo cual equivalía a 30 dólares por hectárea. El gobierno ofrecía en promedio 1.21 dólares pues la Compañía había pagado 20 años atrás tan sólo sesenta centavos de dólar por cada hectárea de las mejores tierras de Guatemala. El 27 de junio de 1952, luego de salvar una serie de obstáculos y con el apoyo de los trabajadores rurales, el Congreso aprobó el decreto 900 que se convertiría en el mas importante parteaguas en la historia agraria guatemalteca. Este decreto facultaba al gobierno para expropiar únicamente las porciones no cultivadas de las grandes plantaciones. Las fincas menores de 90 has. y las que fluctuaban entre 90 y 270 has. quedaban libres de expropiación. Las tierras confiscadas se pagarían con obligaciones de 25 años girabas por el gobierno con una tasa de interés del 3%. El avalúo se efectuaría mediante el valor declarado de impuesto hasta mayo de 1952. Esto, como era de esperarse, disgustó a la United Fruit, que había subvaluado sus tierras. Durante los dieciocho meses que duró el programa, 100 mil familias recibieron un total de 600 mil has. La propiedad expropiada incluyó 700 has. propiedad de Arbenz y 480 de Guillermo Toriello, su embajador en Estados Unidos y después ministro de Relaciones Exteriores. En total, 107 fincas nacionales y el 16% de la tierra ociosa de propiedad privada fue distribuida. Otras 46 fincas se entregaron a grupos de campesinos organizados en cooperativas. El cumplimiento de la ley generó problemas. Entre diciembre del 1953 y abril de 1954, campesinos sin permiso legal invadieron aproximadamente 30 fincas.

Allen, considered to be the future director of the CIA, informed their acquaintances that if communism threatened to take over a country “he would not wait for a written invitation to go there and help” (Ibid.:112).<sup>183</sup> During the Truman administration, there were several plots against the Guatemalan government that had failed. Communism had taken root in Guatemala, and the main evidence provided by the US administration for this was the agrarian reform that had affected the United Fruit Company in particular<sup>184</sup>.

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<sup>183</sup> Los hermanos Dulles decidieron en el verano de 1953 que la CIA dirigiría el golpe y Eisenhower dio luz verde para poner en marcha la operación. Agosto de 1953 fue una fecha crucial para la revolución nacionalista. En la X Conferencia de la Organización de Estados Americanos realizada en mayo de 1954 en Caracas, Venezuela; los Estados Unidos, con el pretexto de condenar la penetración comunista en el hemisferio propusieron una resolución que avalaba la agresión contra Guatemala. 16 países votaron a favor, México y Argentina se abstuvieron y solamente Guatemala votó en contra. Cuando la cuenta regresiva de la intervención norteamericana ya había provocado las primeras perturbaciones en la estabilidad institucional, el gobierno guatemalteco decidió recurrir al Consejo de Seguridad de la Organización de Naciones Unidas. Por cinco votos (Estados Unidos, Brasil, Colombia, Turquía y China) contra cuatro (Unión Soviética, Nueva Zelanda, Líbano y Dinamarca) y las abstenciones de Francia e Inglaterra, el Consejo decidió el 25 de junio no entrar a considerar el caso de Guatemala como lo había solicitado su representante seis días antes. Lo demás es historia conocida por la opinión pública internacional. Honduras proporcionó el campo de refugio a la fuerza mercenaria: Anastasio Somoza padre, en Nicaragua contribuyó con dinero, armas y apoyo logístico; El Salvador prestó su territorio para que los jefes militares traidores a Arbenz negociaran con Castillo Armas y el embajador norteamericano. Seis jefes militares estadounidenses estuvieron presentes en las pláticas realizadas en San Salvador. Castillo Armas reclamaba en la reunión la expulsión de Guatemala de “todos los comunistas” y el encarcelamiento de Arbenz y todo su gabinete. El 30 de junio, el coronel Elfego Monzón, que provisionalmente presidió la Junta militar, designó fiscal general del Estado a José María Moscoso con el propósito de localizar a los comunistas, particularmente a los que trabajaban en el Ministerio de Agricultura y el Banco Agrícola, “las dos agencias guatemaltecas más infiltradas por los rojos y sus partidarios”. La noche de ese mismo día, John Foster Dulles, secretario de Estado, presentó un discurso de 15 minutos para informar a la opinión pública norteamericana sobre la buena marcha de las operaciones en Guatemala. Castillo Armas que tres años antes había huido del país en un breve plazo de 18 días se convirtió en caudillo de la fuerza mercenaria encargada de ejecutar el plan norteamericano. Otros nombres que pudieran cumplir tal función se barajaron antes. “El primer exiliado a quien la CIA, junto con la United Fruit, hizo la propuesta fue el general Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes un exfuncionario de la dictadura de Ubico que se había ganado cierta reputación como político derechista intratable y corrupto, con alguna capacidad de liderazgo y al que seguía un modesto número de partidarios. Había sido candidato en la elección presidencial de 1950 en la que obtuvo un magro segundo puesto detrás de Arbenz y a la que siempre calificó de fraudulenta. Desde entonces vivían en El Salvador y soñaba con una segunda oportunidad. Pero Ydígoras tenía fama de oportunista y de tener inclinaciones hacia la represión militar. Había pasado la mayor parte de su vida en el ejército guatemalteco, en el que demostró deshonestidad y crueldad. Sus críticos lo acusaban de ser especialmente hostil con los indios y se le acusaba de haber organizado varias matanzas durante su cargo en el gobierno de Ubico. Además había sido un celoso ejecutor de las leyes de “vagancia” que obligaban a los indios a trabajar al menos 150 días al año para los terratenientes del país, e inclusive había ejecutado campesinos que se iban secretamente a México a vender cestería tejida a mano. En 1944 había tratado de actuar como intermediario entre Ubico y los revolucionarios guatemaltecos con la intención de apoderarse del gobierno” (Schlensinger y Kinzer op. cit.:135). Castillo Armas, sin embargo, le ganó el turno y Ydígoras necesitó esperar hasta 1958 para llegar a la presidencia.

<sup>184</sup> Castillo Armas, en su calidad de presidente de la Junta, canceló el registro legal de unos 533 sindicatos locales, borrando de un solo golpe a la federación de trabajadores bananeros. Sus enmiendas al Código Laboral casi proscribieron toda organización sindical futura. Los maestros se vieron precisados a sacar una credencial extendida por el Comité Nacional de Defensa contra el Comunismo que certificaba su condición civil y filiación política. Castillo Armas, “un auténtico santo”, según Monseñor Mariano Rosell Arellano, rápidamente restableció los vínculos con la iglesia católica conservadora, mantenida a prudente distancia por los gobiernos guatemaltecos desde el siglo XIX. Restauró el derecho de la Iglesia a tener posesiones, impartir instrucción religiosa en escuelas públicas y traer clero extranjero. Levantó una prohibición a las concesiones petroleras extranjeras, impuesta por Arévalo y mantenida por Arbenz, y alentó a las compañías extranjeras a que compraran derechos de perforación. Hizo que Guatemala reingresara a la Organización de Estados Centroamericanos, pacto regional al cual Arbenz había renunciado cuando se hizo evidente que los demás

## Cold War anthropology in a pre-national country

Castillo Armas suspended the IIN on August 9, 1954, and he reestablished it in October of the same year<sup>185</sup>. The new IIN began to work in conjunction with the recently created *Dirección General de Desarrollo Socio-Educativo Rural*, which substituted the *Dirección de Educación Fundamental* that was in charge of working with different institutions in the rural area.<sup>186</sup> In addition, the IIN offered advice to the *Comisiones Permanentes de Cultura*, a poor imitation of the *Misiones Ambulantes de Cultura Inicial* created by Arevalo. After the resignation of Joaquín Noval, Juan de Dios Rosales, the newly appointed director of the IIN, met with Manuel Gamio in January 1956, and visited the Centro Coordinador Tzeltal-Tzotzil de San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. Gamio had met with Castillo Armas in August of that same year in order to make arrangements in

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miembros se estaban confabulando contra Guatemala. Durante un discurso, el 12 de julio de 1954, Día del Anticomunista, el teniente coronel Castillo Armas canceló “las licencias para el ejercito de profesiones liberales, que el gobierno de Arbenz, con abuso de poder, había proporcionado a elementos admiradores del comunismo...” (Palma 1975:249) Así fue como Guatemala logró la distinción de ser en el mundo “uno de los dos países en los que se jacta la CIA de haber logrado una exitosa operación militar clandestina. El otro, claro, es Irán” (Schlenssigner y Kinzer op. cit.:12). Arbenz, a los 42 años, perdió la presidencia. El “Soldado del pueblo” murió “muy sólo” en Ciudad Satélite, México, D. F., el 27 de enero de 1971 Cardoza (1986:719). Razona Cardoza: “No todo fue alevosías y traiciones en su derredor. Hubo hombres leales y decididos con mando y sin mando y el pueblo estaba con él. No. No. nos derrotaron; derrotaron un régimen que no intentó ni defenderse. El pueblo invicto pronto tomó las armas que entonces no le dieron y lucha con ellas hasta hoy. Se evidenció que los líderes no estuvieron a la altura de su pueblo. ¿Qué ‘amigo’, apolítico, irresponsable, redactó la renuncia del coronel Arbenz a la presidencia? ¿Cómo pudo hacer tal cosa? ¿El atraso de Guatemala?” (Ibid.)

<sup>185</sup> Esta institución, rezaba uno de los considerandos del decreto de suspensión, “ha venido laborando (...) sin llenar plenamente su cometido (...) por la orientación que se ha dado a los objetivos iniciales y (...) con el consiguiente dispendio de los fondos que le han sido asignados en el Presupuesto General de Gastos de la Nación”. “Dos decretos sobre el Instituto Indigenista Nacional”, en BI, v. XIV, n. 1-4, 1954, pp. 280-282. Se estimaba conveniente hacer un estudio completo de la organización y funciones del Instituto con vistas a reorganizarlo y elaborar un nuevo reglamento. Se dispuso que los fondos asignados fueran transferidos al Ministerio de Educación Pública para compra de materiales escolares. La comunidad indigenista del hemisferio no pasó desapercibido este cambio de actitud de parte del gobierno guatemalteco y en el caso mexicano, intelectuales destacados más antiimperialistas que indigenistas repudiaron el intervencionismo. Alfonso Caso, director del Instituto Nacional Indigenista de México, engrosó el círculo de la Sociedad de Amigos de Guatemala, organizada por Luis Cardoza y Aragón, que reunió a personalidades como Lázaro Cárdenas, Guillermo Haro, Isidro Fabela, Jesús Silva Herzog, Pedro de Alba, Fernando Benítez, Enrique González Casanova y Jorge Castañeda, entre otros.

<sup>186</sup> La Dirección General de Desarrollo Socioeducativo Rural, fundada en 1955 mediante el decreto 300, se apoyó en el trabajo anterior de los Núcleos Escolares Campesinos, creados por el SCIDE, y coordinó la actividad de las Comisiones Permanentes de Cultura. El IIN proporcionó adiestramiento a sus técnicos de campo. En 1957, R. N. Adams trabajando para el Servicio Cooperativo Interamericano de Educación (SCIDE) solicitó al Instituto colaborar en la evaluación de las obras materiales realizadas por el Socioeducativo-Rural.

preparation for the IV Congreso Indigenista Interamericano to take place in Guatemala<sup>187</sup>.

In June 1956, there was a an academic meeting in Guatemala in which the Seminario de Integración Social Guatemalteca (SISG) emerged, with the participation of Nathan L. Whetten, Richard N. Adams<sup>188</sup>, Sol Tax, Manning Nash, George Foster, Kalmant H. Silvert y John Gillin among others. The goals of the SISG were to: “Proporcionar a los guatemaltecos interesados en el estudio de los problemas nacionales, los conceptos, métodos y técnicas del análisis de las ciencias sociales, así como una orientación acerca de los resultados que deban esperarse de ellas”<sup>189</sup>. During the meeting “quedó claramente manifiesta la necesidad de proceder a la utilización en gran escala de las ciencias sociales para el conocimiento de los distintos grupos étnicos que viven en el país<sup>190</sup>, como único

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<sup>187</sup> Coincidentemente se celebró en San Salvador, del 26 de junio al 3 de julio de 1955, un Seminario sobre problemas indígenas de Centroamérica y Panamá más que a Guatemala. Como miembros de la delegación guatemalteca asistieron David Vela, nombrado presidente de ese Seminario, Juan de Dios Rosales y Earl Adams, director del ILV, entre otros.

<sup>188</sup> En 1951, Adams trabajó en la reorganización del Archivo de Materiales Culturales del Instituto, “quizá la labor más importante durante el año”, según el informe del IIN “Informe del Instituto Indigenista Nacional: 1951”, BI, v. XII, n. 1-4, 1952. p. 40. A partir de julio de ese año colaboró “con particular empeño” en la tarea global de inventariar la producción antropológica sobre Guatemala existente en el acervo del Instituto. Trabajó en la recopilación y clasificación de fichas bibliográficas y demás documentos relativos a la historia de la investigación social en el país. Participó en la capacitación del personal del Instituto. Impartió durante 1951 un curso de entrenamiento teórico-práctico en Parramos, Chimaltenango en la región cakchiquel. En esta región trabajó a partir de 1945 el Servicio Cooperativo Interamericano de Educación, responsable de la Escuela Rural de la finca “La Alameda” y encargado de funciones especiales en el programa de alfabetización bilingüe e investigación lingüística. Su interés por la antropología aplicada lo llevó a preparar un texto sobre la materia destinado a “trabajadores de bienestar social en América Latina” Una primera edición mimeografiada de este libro se hizo en tres el IIN y el INCAP. Jorge Skinner Kleé fue el traductor. Gracias al apoyo de Adams, el IIN logró tener reorganizado para 1952, el contenido del archivo del último trimestre de 1945 y de los años 1946 y 1947. En 1953 vuelve a mencionarse la “desinteresada asesoría técnica y científica del Dr. Adams a este Instituto” la cual como en años anteriores “fue de un valor inapreciable” “Informe del Instituto Indigenista Nacional:1953” en BI, v. XIV, n. 1-4, 1954, p. 44. Muy oportunamente en su informe de 1955, el primero después de la intervención del año anterior, reportó la continuación del trabajo de reorganización del archivo documental, dentro de lo cual se clasificó, ordenó y encuadernó “la correspondencia egresada de esta Institución durante los años comprendidos de 1946 a 1954”, precisamente el período de mayo actividad del IIN

<sup>189</sup> “El Seminario de Integración Social Guatemalteca”, por Juan Comas, BI, v. XVI, n. 2-3, agosto de 1956, p. 164.

<sup>190</sup> Desde varios años atrás, en agosto de 1946, David Vela dictó una conferencia sobre “la importancia de la antropología aplicada” en donde trató de conciliar “la preocupación por lo pasado y lo porvenir, la natural animosidad científica y la generosa intención de demandar a la ciencia orientaciones para redimir a los herederos legítimos de las culturas aborígenes levantándolos de su condición de masas económica y culturalmente débiles” (“Importancia de la antropología aplicada”, El Imparcial, 5 de septiembre de 1946) Diez años mas tarde, resaltaría la importancia de la antropología aplicada usando similares metáforas: “Además de dar una perspectiva a los esfuerzos en favor del desarrollo nacional, - escribió Adams en. 1956- la antropología proporciona técnicas de análisis y de innovación, que son sumamente útiles a las tentativas de introducir nuevas ideas y nuevas formas de comportamiento. Sin embargo, el interés del antropólogo, a diferencia del de otros especialistas, es específicamente el de hacer efectivos tales empeños con un mínimo de tensiones personales y sociales”. (Adams 1956:17) En el prólogo a la Introducción a la antropología aplicada, escrita, por Adams y traducida por Jorge Skinner Kleé, éste aseguró que “es necesario dotar a quienes se adentran, en, el espinoso campo de



medio de proceder de manera paulatina, al mismo tiempo que integral, a intensificar el proceso de transculturación que debe conducir a la formación de la ciudadanía guatemalteca, ya que actualmente existe verdadera heterogeneidad cultural y lingüística, al igual que ocurre con otros países de Hispanoamérica” (Ibid.:168)<sup>191</sup>.

Some well known indigenistas and IIN collaborators formed part of the SISG, such as David Vela and Jorge Luis Arriola. Arriola later became director of the IIN and was the general secretary of the IV Congreso that took place from May 16 to 25, with the notable absence of the Mexican indigenistas<sup>192</sup>. The IIN reported that the SISG “tuvo a su cargo el trabajo técnico y científico necesario para preparar el IV Congreso”. In 1958, the SISG had

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impulsar modificaciones a segmentos de la sociedad de un conjunto de conocimientos sistematizados sobre cómo nacerlo con el menor daño postule a la sociedad a la que tratan de mejorar," (Adams 1964:8)

<sup>191</sup>Se discutieron “métodos para llegar a esta integración nacional; el alcance cuantitativo y cualitativo que tal proceso puede alcanzar la existencia o no de factores de discriminación y prejuicio racial (en mayor o menor grado), que pudieran dificultar el logro de los objetivos propuestos; los límites del proceso de ladinización o transculturación, y otros muchos problemas concretos de positivo interés. El Seminario no aspiraba a adoptar conclusiones o resoluciones de tipo ejecutivo; -se aclaraba- sin embargo, fue unánime en el criterio de sugerir la conveniencia de intensificar el apoyo a instituciones (v.g. el SISG), como factor de primer orden en el proceso de integración nacional; y asimismo la conveniencia de que la administración pública, en sus diversas ramas, utilizara a técnicos en ciencias sociales, para la mayor eficacia de las medidas adoptadas a favor del mejoramiento de los distintos núcleos de población. En las breves palabras que pronunció Jorge Skinner Kleé en la sesión de clausura, “oímos con satisfacción, -dice la nota- el anuncio de que el gobierno había decidido no solo impulsar las actividades del Instituto Indigenista Nacional, sino también dar carácter definitivo al Seminario de Integración Social Guatemala bajo la forma de Institución autónoma o de Secretariado permanente” (Ibid.:168-169).

<sup>192</sup> Como delegado del Perú, llegó un hispanizado Guillermo Townsend en representación del ILV. Un caso similar de hispanización se da con William Sedat, estudioso del kekchí que aparece como Guillermo Sedat. Goubaud escribe Juan Gillen en relación a John Gillin. Por aclamación fue electo Presidente Ejecutivo del Congreso, David Vela, que tres años antes había presidido la realización del Primer Seminario sobre Problemas Indígenas de Centroamérica y Panamá y participado en la estructuración del SISG. Entre los participantes con trabajo en Guatemala, la segunda delegación más numerosa fue la del ILV con trece personas. Asistieron también el SCIDE, el Socioeducativo Rural, el Instituto Bíblico Centroamericano, la Misión Presbiteriana, los Departamentos Agropecuarios y de Alfabetización del Ejército, la Asociación General de Agricultores y el SISG. Al final del evento se emitieron resoluciones de homenaje a homenaje a Tecún Umán, Antonio Goubaud Carrera, Moisés Sáenz José María Reina Barrios, Sóstenes Esponda que organizó el Primer Congreso Pedagógico Centroamericano en 1894 y a Carlos A. Velásquez, Antonio Lazo Arriaga, Darío González y Francisco Muñoz por sus aportes indigenistas a la educación. Se develó en la biblioteca del III en la ciudad de México una placa en honor a Atanasio Tzul, Tupac Amaru y otros jefes indígenas del continente. La resolución XLIII del Congreso contiene una mención de reconocimiento al trabajo del SISG y pide al gobierno de Guatemala “dar todo su apoyo al mencionado Seminario” (Ibid.:224). El Seminario comenzó sus trabajos “con la misión de sistematizar los conocimientos científicos sociales que se tienen sobre Guatemala” y sus actividades se desarrollaban en tres campos: organizativo, editorial y consultivo. Al SISG le correspondió organizar la Primera Conferencia sobre Integración Social “que se haya celebrado en el mundo, abriendo nuevas perspectivas al estudio de los pueblos que tienen una composición heterogénea y necesitan hallar una formulación que los ayude a unificarse socialmente, a fin de poder funcionar como naciones modernas”. (Ibid.:226). Cfr. para todo lo relativo al IV Congreso; BI, v. XIX, n 1 3, 1959, pp. 129-179.

already published nine books, of 38,000 copies each, which was the product of two and a half years of work<sup>193</sup>

Before Richard N. Adams was known for his positions on Ladinoization in Guatemala, as I mentioned earlier, John Gillin (1949, 1957), taking on some of the positions of the SISG, argued in favor of the recognition of the mestizo nature of Latin America. Gillin claimed that there was a mestizo-American civilization at the same level of those of Europe, Asia and Africa. This civilization possessed unique characteristics and was of much interest to businessmen, officials, military officers, religious ministers and academics, who noticed the commercial potential of the millions of indigenous, Afro-descendants who had been left out of the dynamic of the modern market. In this sense, Adams as well as Gillin, assumed mestizaje, Ladinoization and “social integration” as vehicles of social mobility and the expansion of consumerism. These contributions to the implementation of the *cambio cultural dirigido* and political modernization of Latin America were much more notable during the 1950s when there were high expectations for the positive impact of post-WWII US investments on the continent. After the fall of fascism, US investments redirected their attention to the reconstruction of Europe. It was

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<sup>193</sup>En estos volúmenes “encuentra el estudioso material de incalculable valor para la formulación y aplicación de la política social y económica del país, así como para la planificación de su futuro desarrollo, tanto inmediato como a largo plazo” (Ibid.). Menciona que entre sus planes para el futuro está el formar un “instituto de ciencias sociales” para llenar el vacío del conocimiento de la realidad nacional que –según esto- progresivamente aumentaría conforme aumentaran los programas de bienestar social. Es necesario asegurar, evaluar los estudios ya realizados para completar aspectos que no hayan sido profundizados y llenar lagunas. Recordaba: “aún no se han hecho estudios de áreas; no se han investigado suficientemente las sociedades urbanas; se ignora lo que ocurre a los indígenas que se trasladan a las urbes y se carece de estudios relativos a las relaciones entre los grupos étnicos” (Ibid.:228). Además se planteó otras tres iniciativas: a) Colaborar con el gobierno para introducir en todos los niveles educativos, el estudio de las sociedades guatemaltecas “con el fin de acelerar el proceso de integración social” (Ibid.:230). b) Apoyar a las autoridades en la organización del estudio de las ciencias sociológicas en el nivel post-primario de la educación, y ofrece a la Universidad el mismo tipo de ayuda en el nivel académico (Ibid.) y c) Por último: “Promover, por los medios adecuados y en la forma más amplia, un movimiento de opinión nacional, favorable al conocimiento de los problemas que plantea la integración social guatemalteca, como paso previo e indispensable para la resolución de los mismos” (Ibid.) Entre sus planes a futuro, el SISG planteó organizar un archivo de datos culturales conforme al sistema conocido de Archivo de Materiales Culturales para el Estudio Avanzado de Sociedades y Culturas con todos los datos de las sociedades guatemaltecas o centroamericanas “clasificados en forma tal que pudiese liberarse de la enorme y lenta tarea de buscarlos personalmente en los miles de páginas de literatura escrita” (Ibid. )

only after the Cuban revolution that the US regained interest in building showcase countries in which the expansion of the middle-class would serve as an ideological device to contain the spread of revolutionary nationalism around the world<sup>194</sup>.

In the throws of the Cold War, the institute occupied itself with promoting projects, such as the creation of the Museo del Indio Guatemalteco, that would, among its objectives, “exhibir y reproducir algunos valores de su cultura e interesar a guatemaltecos y extranjeros para lograr la efectiva transculturación del indígena”<sup>195</sup>. The IIN supported the petition that officially established the “Día del Indio”, an initiative that was put into practice by the government of general Ramón Ydígoras in 1958<sup>196</sup>. One of the principal IIN projects (1956), named “Plan de mejoramiento integral de una comunidad indígena”, declared that

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<sup>194</sup> En su estudio titulado “*Social Science Reserach in Guatemala and the role of U. S. Personnel 1950-1967*”, Calvin P. Blair, afirma que la investigación social en Guatemala “se ha realizado desde 1950 en un ambiente en el cual los Estados han sido casi omnipresentes. Una mezcla de intereses de seguridad, de diplomacia, comercio, académicos, evangélicos, se ha manifestado en la presencia de cientos de americanos, quienes están rezando, espionando, o tratando de ayudar: asesores militares, la CIA, la AID, los Cuerpos de Paz, hombres de negocios, estudiantes, maestros, investigadores académicos y misioneros tanto religiosos como seculares. Quizá, ningún otro país latinoamericano ha experimentado en tiempos recientes una influencia de un poder extranjero tan penetrante y evidente; y seguro ningún país pequeño, a excepción de Panamá, ha sentido tanta influencia de los Estados Unidos en relación con su tamaño y su importancia mundial” (Ibid.:1). Según Blair, durante la primera parte del período que abarca su investigación (1950-1967), el interés del personal norteamericano se concentró en el combate al comunismo. En el período (1960-1968) las publicaciones oficiales se centraron en temas como negocios, condiciones de vida, leyes laborales y oportunidades de inversión. En general el interés en orden de prioridades se observó así: Comunismo, oportunidades de negocios y turismo. Del total de académicos norteamericanos a quienes se consultó, la mayor parte afirmó que usualmente emplearon estudiantes y personas de la localidad como informantes pero en ningún momento se incorporó a guatemaltecos como colaboradores profesionales con igual status que los norteamericanos. En su parte propositiva, este informe menciona en reiteradas oportunidades el provecho que las funciones del SISG han permitido a la comunidad científica nacional y norteamericana. El informe es resultado de un trabajo de campo de cuatro semanas durante julio y octubre de 1968 y un cuestionario corto enviado a 160 científicos sociales, en su mayoría antropólogos de Estados Unidos que habían trabajado en Guatemala. Otro cuestionario similar se envió a 150 institutos e investigadores en el país, uno más a 50 bibliotecas guatemaltecas. 30 entrevistas fueron con individuos claves para las ciencias sociales guatemaltecas. Se recibió el apoyo del SISG, en particular del doctor Flavio Rojas Lima.

<sup>195</sup> “Informe del Instituto Indigenista Nacional: 1954”, BI, v. XV, n. 1-4, 1955, p. 68. La actividad del Instituto fue trastocada por el golpe de 1954, incluidas sus publicaciones. “Al reanudar la edición de su Boletín, el Instituto Indigenista Nacional hace atenta invitación a los investigadores en el campo de las ciencias sociales a fin de que se sirvan colaborar en él en su esfuerzo para hacer más efectivo el proceso de aculturación del indígena americano, especialmente del guatemalteco”, decía una nota publicada en el BIIN, v. II, n. 1-4, 1956, reeditado en 1960.

<sup>196</sup> El 9 de abril de 1959 se emitió un decreto que instituyó el 19 de abril como Día del Indio, “Arquitecto original de la más pura nacionalidad guatemalteca”. Cuñas publicadas en la prensa, radio y televisión de esa época decían cosas como las siguientes: “no nos conviene conservar “indio” al indio”, ni indigenizar al país sino realizar la integración social guatemalteca”, “la escuela debe dar más oportunidad de estudio al indígena para facilitar su transculturación” “Falta una mentalidad empresarial auténticamente moderna que aproveche al máximo el gran potencial humano del indígena”; “Un objetivo urgente es la guatemaltequización integral del indígena”. Todos estos lemas se divulgaron durante el régimen de Ydígoras Fuentes, quien desde la tiranía de Ubico era criticado por “ser especialmente hostil con los indios”. cfr. IIN (1970)

the Institute “cuenta con doce años de experiencia en el campo de las investigaciones sociales y antropológicas en el medio rural guatemalteco, considera tener ya la madurez y capacidad necesarias para plantear de manera efectiva y práctica este fundamental problema social de Guatemala”, o sea el “problema indígena”<sup>197</sup>. At the request of the Comité de Defensa Nacional contra el Comunismo, the IIN translated from Spanish to Quiché “una lección dedicada a los campesinos guatemaltecos”<sup>198</sup>.

## Conclusions

As a set of public policies aimed at converting Indians into Ladino consumers, the indigenista program in Guatemala followed the guidelines established by the *Acta de Patzcuaro* (1940) and implemented with the assistance of US technicians and academics, particularly in relation to bilingual education, literacy and castellanization. Robert Redfield’s predictions about the role of Guatemalan anthropologists in the country’s modernization were dissolved by the excesses of the war against communism carried out by a conservative alliance among landowners, the Catholic Church, and the US private and governmental interests. The Guatemalan State never created an academic infrastructure that would help meet the indigenista goals of the Arevalo and Arbenz administrations. Instead,

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<sup>197</sup> “El aborigen, que se halla en una relación de 53.6% en la población nacional. –afirmaba la nota- sigue oponiendo una defensa pasiva ante los beneficios de los cambios culturales que se le presentan”. “El indígena con mayor poder adquisitivo y con una cultura nacional –dice la presentación del Plan- será un mejor productor y consumidor y un ciudadano activo y para ello tenemos que adaptarlo científicamente por medio del sistema que proponemos y que abarca integralmente los siguientes aspectos:” Salubridad, alfabetización, vivienda, vestido, vías de comunicación, agricultura y artes e industrias. El plan incluía un apartado especial relativo al “aprovechamiento del tiempo libre como medio de aculturación”. El uso del tiempo para la aculturación incluyó la proyección de películas proporcionadas por el Departamento Cultural de la Embajada de los Estados Unidos. El Instituto fue convirtiéndose en un organismo menor. En 1955, a solicitud de la Primera sección del Estado Mayor y del Primer Regimiento de Infantería, personal del Instituto dictó y grabó una conferencia como apoyo al Ejército Nacional para resolver tensiones en algunas comunidades indígenas, Cfr. “Informe del Instituto Indigenista Nacional: 1955”, BI, v. XVI, n. 1-4, 1956, p. 58. Para todo lo relativo a este punto, cfr. “Plan de Mejoramiento integral de una comunidad indígena”, BIIN, v. II, -1960, 2ª. época, reedición de los números publicados en 1956.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.:58-60. Hacia el 21 de noviembre de 1954, el Comité que había recibido el derecho de reunirse en secreto y denunciar a cualquiera como comunista sin derecho alguno de defensa o apelación, tenía en sus archivos a unas 72,000 personas y buscaba tener un total de 2000,000, cfr. Schlesinger y Kinzer (op. cit.:248)

after the coup d'Etat that removed Arbenz from power, social sciences applied to cultural change and political stabilization were reframed through the works of the *Seminario de Integración Social Guatemalteca*, an institution controlled and directed by US academics that provided a conceptual framework for public policies directed at *community development* without affecting the interests of the local oligarchy and US corporations.

The decline of Guatemalan institutional indigenismo moved the UN to ask Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, the Mexican anthropologist, who was the former official of the Mexican Instituto Indigenista and president of the Universidad Veracruzana (1958), to conduct research in several Guatemalan communities<sup>199</sup>. The UN and Guatemalan governments' goal was to establish a social welfare program in rural areas, similar to those that had been developed by the Mexican Secretary of Health and Social Welfare<sup>200</sup>.

An official IIN document, published in 1969, illustrates the conceptual framework of indigenismo, at a time when political violence had already taken dozens of victims, primarily from rural communities in the Eastern part of the country. "El indigenismo justifica también un cierto paternalismo que, desde luego, no es colonialismo, ni imposición, ni caridad o conmiseración, sino tendencia a usar los medios de persuasión" (...). "...la discriminación y el sometimiento hicieron que el indígena se refugiara más obstinadamente en sus costumbres ancestrales y por ello orientara todos los actos de su vida

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<sup>199</sup> Ese mismo año, Manning Nash realizó un balance de los estudios de las instituciones político-religiosas en las comunidades mayenses de México y Guatemala. La mayor parte de los estudios se hicieron bajo la óptica de lo publicado por Tax en 1937 en relación al municipio como unidad básica de análisis. Cfr. Medina (1984). Según Harry Mc Arthur y Roland H. Ebel, "a raíz de la publicación de un artículo de Fernando Cámara sobre la organización religiosa y política de las comunidades mesoamericanas -aparecido en *Heritage of Conquest* en 1952- los investigadores orientaron su atención hacia los cambios que experimentaban esas comunidades. Desde la publicación del estudio mencionado e influidos por los -conceptos norteamericanos de "desarrollo" y "modernización", algunos científicos sociales trataron de estudiar con mayor precisión los procesos del cambio social y político en las comunidades guatemaltecas. Entre los esfuerzos de mayor utilidad en cuanto a la descripción de esos procesos, figuran el estudio de Manning Nash sobre el impacto de la industrialización en la vida política de Cantel, el análisis más general de las relaciones políticas a nivel de comunidad, dentro de Guatemala, por el mismo autor (1956) y (1958) y la colección de nueve pequeños artículos sobre cambio político editada por Richard N. Adams bajo el título de *Political changes in Guatemalan Indian communities*", presentada al simposio que el mismo organizó en la Universidad de Tulane en 1957.

<sup>200</sup>Cfr. BI. v. XVIII, n. 4, diciembre de 1958.

hacia un misticismo mágico, volviéndolo un elemento totalmente conformista, sin mayores ambiciones ni aspiraciones que lo estimularan a salir de ese estado de marasmo en que se mantiene, esperando únicamente lo que el más allá pudiera proporcionarle, viviendo exclusivamente una vida de subsistencia. Por esa actitud de rebelión pasiva, el indígena se convirtió en un lastre para el desarrollo social, económico y cultural de los países latinoamericanos..." (Ibid.) In addition, the "cuestión del idioma" and "el obstáculo de la geografía", according to this anonymous autor, were two of the principal problems impeding the development of a more effective indigenista strategy. "¿Cómo puede haber armonía o equilibrio en algún orden de la vida, si en un territorio relativamente pequeño se hablan 24 idiomas diferentes, de los cuales 23 son indígenas y uno es europeo?", the autor asked in another part of this document<sup>201</sup>.

The decay of indigenismo and the US-sponsored dismantling of revolutionary nationalism in Guatemala constituted a major reversion of progressive modernity that damaged the country's institutional process and increased social polarization, racism, inequality, and the mobilizing power of whiteness and anti-communism. The pauperization of workers and the conversion of the Army into the leading institution within the State fractured the country and reinstated the power of violence and authoritarianism in daily life and social interactions. Indians did not become middle-class Ladinos as expected by the US and Guatemalan indigenistas, and popular unrest and insurgency were contested by massive killing, confirming the regressive character of Guatemala's modernization. As a result of the regional and national turmoil, Indians continued to be a "problem" and

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<sup>201</sup> Para elaborar esos planteamientos, según el documento, se consultó a diversos sectores vinculados a las comunidades indígenas como la Dirección General de Desarrollo Socio-educativo Rural, la Iglesia católica, el Instituto Lingüístico de Verano, la Alianza para el Progreso, los Cuerpos de Paz, a quienes el IIN dio un curso de entrenamiento en 1966, la Agencia Internacional para el Desarrollo (AID) y el Departamento de Acción Cívica del Ejército.

the ideological objectives of the counter-insurgency moved to new symbolic and material scenarios, targeting this time the young and unemployed Indians and popular Ladinos that in the racist jargon are known as *shumos*, *mucos* and *choleros*.

## Chapter III

### From the “Indian Problem” to the “Youth Problem”

In this chapter, I will examine how modernization in Guatemala went from the *problema del Indio* to the *problema de la juventud*, criminalizing unemployed and poor young Indians or Ladinos and associated to the presence of *maras estudiantiles* and *maras territoriales*. I analyze some of the factors that in recent years provoked an exacerbation of racist and classist sentiments against young indigenous and Ladino youths from the middle-lower and poor classes stigmatized as *shumos*, *mucos* and *choleros*. As a matter of representation and symbolic war, the anti-*shumo*, anti-*muco* and anti-*cholero* sentiment is an important part of the reproduction of the ideological values of whiteness, social Darwinism, disciplinarian measures, servile relationships and unwritten rules that establish the place that corresponds to each person in society. If the 1980s were characterized in Guatemala by popular uprisings and genocide, the 1990s was the decade of strongest anti-indigenous and anti-poor *mestizo* sentiment. These sentiments were the ideological response of the upper and middle classes to political and cultural modifications introduced by the indigenous movement, intra-national and international migration and the greater visibility of urban youth who lacked opportunities for education or employment and were therefore bound to swell the ranks of the *maras territoriales*, which in the previous ten



years had stolen the attention from the *maras estudiantiles*.

### ***El problema de la juventud***

From the dawn of the liberal reform of the nineteenth century and up to the present day, white supremacy has been wanting to collect the bill for the bankruptcy of the civilization project of those pejoratively referred to as *Indios*, but in recent years it has been increasingly blaming *shumos*, *mucos* and *choleros* for the dislocation of society and its institutions. More than fifty years ago, the main “problem” facing the construction of the Nation-State and the centralized reproduction of the modernizing power of capitalism and liberal democracy in Latin America was the “Indian Problem”. The solution for it was supposed to come from the “social integration” of indigenous people into the “*homogenous nation*,” an integration that anthropology in particular was going to facilitate (Redfield 1945). The “Indian Problem” was later compounded by the “Women Problem,” and in more recent years the controversy of regressive, simulated or failed modernization shifted to the conceptual universe of the “Youth Problem.” The discourse which considers youth as a “problem”, rather than as the social energy necessary for the construction of democracy in Guatemala has denigrated and criminalized the more vulnerable youth populations. Each day that goes by, hundreds of thousands of young people, excluded from the job market and criminalized by the dominant society, become part of the “Youth Problem,” the latest great scapegoat of late capitalism in the periphery of the world<sup>202</sup>. The criminalization of youth

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<sup>202</sup> Research on the cultural and political universe of Guatemalan youth after the Peace Agreements in December 1996 has been very scarce. There are not enough studies about the role of racism and authoritarianism in the imaginary of young people from various social strata, although both phenomena are frequently mentioned in the reports of international organizations and NGOs which promote the organized participation of youth in the reconstruction of the State and the society. One of the first investigations in recent years is the report *Perspectivas de los jóvenes sobre la democracia en Guatemala* (1998), published by the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) with the support of the Swedish Agency for International Development. The investigation, carried out by Lilian de Cazali, Virgilio Reyes and Víctor J. Moscoso, polled 600 students between the ages of 15 and 22, half of them men and half women, at 40 private

in Latin America, particularly of poor, non-white youths, makes the unemployed youth into a vagrant, and reinforces the old myths of the dominant mentality which identifies the origin of delinquency in the proliferation of lazy people with bad habits. In addition to this we must consider the motivating power of hegemonic representations which racialize inequality and legitimize an “iron hand” approach to all those who, because of indigenous or working-class roots, are considered racially, socially and culturally inferior<sup>203</sup>. As in other nations around the world, the construction of what pertains to the young and of youth itself in Guatemala has been a projection of the urban local way of being, that is, a dweller of the capital city, educated, Europeanized, “white” or mestizo, non-indigenous and observant of the values of civilization, Christianity, cultural modernity, the market and the enthusiasm for capitalism (Foley 1990 and Willis 1981)<sup>204</sup>. These representations have

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and public schools in 9 municipalities during August and September, 1997. Although the results of the investigation do not reflect the complexity of interethnic relations or the far-reaching effects of authoritarianism, it is significant that a 64.14% of the student population which participated in the poll replied that in Guatemala young people’s rights are not respected. 18% of the 600 polled defined themselves as Mayan or Indigenous, and 48.50% said that drugs are the main problem that young people face. 41.04% were of the opinion that democracy does not solve Guatemala’s problems. The questions in this project might have been better phrased, and the analysis of the results seems to see no problem in the fact that many of the replies clearly show the influence of mass media and religious institutions. It is nevertheless important to recognize that this brief report on Guatemalan youth is the first academic material published by national researchers in the new era after the armed conflict.

<sup>203</sup> The subject of Guatemalan youth resembles that of working-class Ladinos and their relations with indigenous peoples and with the cultural and political processes generated by the migration of both groups to Mexico, the United States and Canada. Most of the few projects seeking to approach the subject of the role of racial and class ideologies in the cultural universe of Guatemalan youth have been carried out by sociologists, economists, political scientists, youth specialists, historians or social workers. Because the ethnographic perspective is so limited as to be practically non-existent, the possibility is lost of placing the statistical information gathered by international agencies, national government organizations and NGOs into context. In his sociological essays about youth and politics published under the title *Nadie quiere soñar despierto*, René Poitevin warns of the apathy, indifference, ignorance, “collective frustration” and “individualism” among Guatemalan youth, and points out “the lack of a true national project to construct a state archetype capable of hegemonizing and not only dominating over a given territory.” Young people, says Poitevin, are pessimistic about the future of the country. They lack a utopia that “allows them to dream and to project themselves in a collective dream.” The ability to dream has vanished, and most prefer to hide within themselves. In spite of the timely way in which it complements the report of the research project on *Guatemalan Youth at the End of the 20th Century*, by the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, this work fails to mention two aspects which are fundamental to any contemporary vision of Guatemalan youth: the first is the fact that indigenous minors constitute the majority of the underage population in Guatemala. The second is the omission of the processes of criminalization of poverty that are acting in favor of the marerizacion and *cholerizacion* of Guatemalan indigenous and working class *mestizo* population, although it does analyze the relation between youth, democracy, State, education, sexuality, drugs, violence, the reconstruction of society and the future of the Central American region.

<sup>204</sup> This construction of youth and its relation to racist and authoritarian conservatism in Guatemala has precedents in the civic-cultural phenomenon known as the Minerva Festivals, which were organized by the dictator Manuel Estrada Cabrera (1898-1920) in honor of student youth. These festivals included the construction of temples to Minerva in many towns

been historically oriented to give visibility to youth who attend school, to the technological and cultural sophistication of the economy of agricultural exports and to the symbolic values of whiteness that goes beyond the colors or phenotypes that separate light-skinned *canches* from dark-skinned *morenos*.

### **The *Maras***

I review the metamorphoses of the concept *mara* during the 1960s as a counter-cultural label that unified *gente corriente*, and later influenced the formation of *maras estudiantiles* (1970s and 1980s); and *maras territoriales* (late 1980s and 1990s). I argue that the presence of both kinds of *maras*, determined the emergence of the *sentimiento anti-cholero* and a virulent criminalization of dark plebeians by upper and middle-class Guatemalans during the 1990s. In the political and transnational definition of the symbolic universe of youth in Guatemala and its relation to racial, cultural and class stereotypes, it is important to highlight the historical presence of the concept of *mara*. This concept reflects a feeling of belonging that can be seen also among people from middle and even elite classes, who use it to express a sense of collective identity at the national and transnational

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and the publication of expensively printed commemorative albums with articles, messages, photographs, and chronicles from literary and political figures from liberal Latin American, European and North American countries. Rafael Spíndola, Máximo Soto Hall, Enrique Gómez Carrillo, Rubén Darío and Jose Santos Chocano were some of the intellectuals who lent their names to the so called “religion of culture” promoted by the President in honor of Guatemalan youth. Although the organizing principle of the whole discourse was submission towards Estrada Cabrera, the Minervalias combined a great ornamental and iconic display alluding to education, pedagogy, theory of history, civilization, nationalism, classic tradition, and, as one of the authors says, “the value of ideas” and the persuasive power of images. It was a time of a civic effort geared toward the glorification of “illustrious names” which would help place Guatemala on the “map of the civilized world,” according to the album’s introduction. The Minervalias included dancing waltzes, mazurkas, *pasos doble*, hymns, military marches, flag honors, marimba concerts, poetry readings, oratory, pyrotechnics, medals and awards, balloons, competitions, prizes and food. References to indigenous youth and children were marginal (at the celebration of Minervales in the provinces) or non-existent. In the festival which took place in Alta Verapaz, there is a mention of the prize won by María Victoria Motta for her work “Method to Achieve a Higher School Attendance and the Most Practical Way of Educating the Indigenous People of the Provinces.” The various activities were carried out in a notably martial spirit that exalted virility, hygiene, discipline and “combating vice and ignorance.” For example, Enrique Gómez Carrillo wrote from the General Consulate of Guatemala in Hamburg, Germany to report the conclusions of the Congress of School Hygiene celebrated in Paris, and with the same socio-racial and military emphasis, E. V. Bergmann, a German writer, sent an article titled “What Fire doesn’t Cure, Iron Cures.” An anonymous writer, grounded in racial superiority, writes in the name of the Bolivia federation in Washington, D.C. welcoming the initiative of Estrada Cabrera with the following statement: “I believe Saxons are right to give their strong young men a brief but solid education.”

level. Before it came to designate juvenile organized crime, the *mara* was a metasociological equivalent of *banda*, *grey*, *broza*, *raza*, *manga* or *piña*, terms of the local slang which loosely mean gang, brotherhood or mob. The coming out of the *mara* as counterculture expression of urban Guatemalan youth at the end of the 1950s was an attempt to contain at an ideological level the enormous impact of political repression as part of the counterinsurgency imposed by the Army and the State since 1954. Marco Augusto Quiroa locates the origin of the *mara* in the time of the showing in Guatemala of the film *Marabunta*, starring Charlton Heston. Quiroa points out the collective sentiment of the concept as used to refer to the will of the masses, to popular public opinion and the interclass space in opposition to the State<sup>205</sup>. “*Mara*” stands for “the people,” with an emphasis on young, urban population of indigenous or Ladino extraction. It is a term that still refers to the intercultural brotherhood of poverty and to the generalized social unconformity in the face of the dominant power’s abuses and impunity.

### ***Maras Estudiantiles***

*Maras estudiantiles* of the 1960s were part of the school identity of mostly non-indigenous students from public and private schools who participated every year in basketball tournaments in the Guatemala City gymnasium Teodoro Palacios Flores. As an

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<sup>205</sup> Written in a slang that combines words from Guatemalan Spanish dialect and others invented by the author, Quiroa offers a vision of the history and contemporary meanings of the word *mara* through irony and humor. Following is a quote in original Spanish: “Los chirices de la nueva ola y las patojas recién salidas del cascarón, tal vez no sepan el origen de la palabra *mara*, usada en la actualidad para designar con pelos y lunares a grupos de diferente índole y distinta conducta” (...) “Por esos añejos 60s vino un peliculón con Charlton Heston llamado *Marabunta*, que trataba de colonias millonarias y neoliberales de hormigas canches, entre arrieras y zompobos, que cuando se les alborotaba el apellido implantaban en la selva amazónica la política de tierra arrasada, usando el método de aqueche. A paso redoblado devoraban hombre, mujer, animal o cosa y nomás dejaban varejones tres peles y huesos pelados oliendo limpio. Esas hormigas no atinaban en color y tamaño” (...) “Esas resultas asociaciones y sindicatos, pandillas y grupos, adoptaron el vocablo para dirigirse a colectivos de buenas y malas costumbres. Muchachos obedientes a la ley del menor esfuerzo y ahorrativos al máximo, abreviaron la palabra cuteándola a *mara* como se conoce al sol de hoy. Es usada y abusada por chancles aguancateros de la Zona Viva, chicas fresa del Montemaruca, hierberos del cartel de El Gallito, diputados expertos en buscarle tres pies al gato e introducir mano de simio a deshoras de la noche y esforzados guajeros del basurero multifamiliar de la zona tres.”

expression of a school spirit that spanned generations and social classes, the *maras estudiantiles* remained visible during the 1980s, but after the protests that resulted in the overthrow of President Jorge Serrano Elías in June 1993, they were outshone by the *maras territoriales*<sup>206</sup>. During periods of social unrest, when the newspapers were filled every day with news about “street disturbances” and “lazy students who don’t like studying,” the association between being student at a public institute, being *marero* and being a vandal is almost automatic. As part of the criminalization of the youth movements, young students who lived in the barrios, in working-class settlements or neighborhoods were identified as *mareros*, *shumos*, *mucos* or *choleros* who, instead of studying or working, prefer to commit crimes, loiter, or be part of “*bochinches*.” It is well known in Guatemala that the government and the media, in order to keep order and maintain “democracy,” tend to criminalize any manifestation of dissidence or social insurgency, whether organized or spontaneous. The *bochinche* demonstrates the institutional failure of the State and the atrophy of its mechanisms for political participation. *Bochinche* is a concept of the Guatemalan conservative liberalism, created from the ambiguous distance of the city observer who admires, but at the same time fears, the civic effervescence of the anonymous protesting crowd. Whether as carnival or as reactionary criticism; the history of the *bochinche* and the *mara* show the way in which the State and the dominant elite use to criminalize the participation of young people in popular demonstrations.

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<sup>206</sup> During the *bochinches* of 1992 and 1993, the minister of education, María Luisa Beltranena used a strategy that had been used in previous decades when she canceled the registration of students “in order to counter the actions of the young people who want to laze in idleness.” Canceling the registration of “lazy” students or militarizing schools and colleges are solutions that government officials and news editorials always call for to justify the efforts of the State to keep “the empire of the law” this was a situation in which the ministers of education and state had warned they would not scruple in dealing with those who broke the law. The national police anti-demonstrations squad broke into the Instituto Nacional Central para Varones, made several of those arrested take off their shoes and pants, and one student was forced to drink bleach. Students were protesting the lack of teachers, but according to the authorities, “the *maras* joined in to cause disturbances.” The government kept the option open to declare state of emergency, youth continued to demonstrate, the Public Ministry threatened to throw the *bochincheros* in jail. In the midst of this media frenzy, a journalist asked Magda Bianchi de Serrano, wife of the nation's president, to ask her opinion about the student protests: “Well, to be honest, I have been very busy, and I really don’t know much about what is going on in the nation. Thank you very much.”

For over a hundred years, the words *bochinche* and *bochincheros* have been a negative portrait of any expression which implied collective public discontent with the order imposed by the State and the ruling classes. The construction of social and student protests as *bochinche* or breaking of constitutional order is still an effective tool to justify the use of disciplinarian measures. In this context, the relationship between “*mara*,” “*bochinche*” and “disciplinarian measures” form a set with great historical significance in the political socialization of young people, most of them from urban, indigenous and *ladino* extraction. The social and political mobilization of youth in Guatemala during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was part of the struggles of the middle class, working class and peasant sectors against dictatorship and in demand of social reforms and material and academic improvements for the school system. Throughout their modern history the public institutes of middle education in the provinces of Guatemala, Sacatepéquez, Quetzaltenango, Totonicapán, Escuintla, Suchitepéquez, San Marcos, Alta Verapaz and Chiquimula have participated in public demonstrations which are generally labeled “*bochinches*.” The struggle against dictatorships of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the recent armed conflict and the scatological repertoire produced by the Comparsa Centenaria Universitaria which parades the central street of Guatemala City in a spectacle known as the Huelga de Dolores, are all part of the official and popular history of the *bochinche*. The *bochincheros* of the center of Guatemala City were not always the young *mareros*, *mucos* or *shumos*, which the conservative press now stigmatizes. They were young civil servants, artisans and college students of the middle class, and even some from the intellectual bourgeoisie, who were very active in bringing down the dictatorships of Manuel Estrada Cabrera (1898-1920) and of General Jorge Ubico (1931-1944). In the decades that followed, the urban middle and working classes had an important role in the guerrilla

movements of the 1960s and 1970s, when the unions and the peasant movement had greater mobilization ability. The convergence of the student movement with the remnants of anti-imperialist nationalism within the Army in the 1960's favored the peak of the organized student movement, composed mainly of urban Ladinos which took place in Guatemala after the downfall of the dictatorship of Ubico in 1944. The movement of March and April 1962 and the union and working-class mobilizations that followed in the next decades were an important subjective factor for many middle and higher education students, both indigenous and not, to join the guerrilla insurgency. Thus the transformation of the *bochinche* into insurgency created a space for radical response against the oligarchic and transnational power. Up to the 1970's *bochinches* were associated with anti-government struggles and with the ludic scatology which ridicules power during the Huelga de Dolores, a theatrical showcase which until recently was an important nerve of the youth and student protests in the capital and in Quetzaltenango. This explains the ambivalence of the population, particularly the adult population of the middle classes, towards participation in or support of public demonstrations and the carnivalization of the *bochinche*. The interest of the adult population in the older parts of Guatemala City in *bochinches* started to wane more or less at the time when the army began its *tierra arrasada* campaigns to extinguish the insurgency movement during the regime of General Romeo Lucas García (1978-1982).

The State, the press and the dominant mentality call *bochinche* what the student and working-class insurgency call "*medidas de hecho*". During the last decade, *bochincheros* began to be labeled as *mareros*, *shumos*, *mucos* or *choleros*. The "*medidas de hecho*" of the *bochincheros* included marches, demonstrations, strikes, suspension of activities at school, blocking streets, barricades, burning tires, occupying facilities, and sometimes blocking roads to collect contributions from travelers or to hand out propaganda. The rise in the cost

of urban public transport is still the most explosive detonator to turn “*medidas de hecho*” into *bochinches*, and it is against buses and other transport units that the protesting “*mara*” generally vents its rage. When schools or other facilities are taken over by students, there usually follows an attempt by the police to force them out, if negotiations fail. Such clashes usually result in students being arrested, wounded and even killed. When the police arrive to dismantle a barricade or to force students out of a building, it is often met with a storm of stones, bottles, sticks and, in more serious cases, Molotov cocktails. Cars are sometimes burnt and stores ransacked. The police sometimes open fire against protesters and make arrests, usually followed by beatings that leave students severely wounded and sometimes dead. In the past, the State security apparatus intimidated, searched and seized people, sometimes only holding them for a few hours—but sometimes, with the argument that protesting students were linked to the guerrilla movement, they were secretly executed.

It is important to specify, however, that as a result of the disturbances caused by the militarization of society and the armed conflict, along with other more or less violent forms of student protests, there emerged in Guatemala another type of violence. Halfway between the *bochinche* and criminal vandalism, from the intersection of *maras estudiantiles* and *maras territoriales*, are what we could call the *phantasmatic violence*, a term coined by J. Spiegel (1998) to refer to the type of violence that emerged in Indonesia after the killing of more than a million communists during the 1960s.

As in other parts of the colonial and neo-colonial world, where for many young people guerrilla insurgence opened spaces of symbolical political restitution at a very high and painful cost, in Guatemala, insurgency and counter-insurgency contributed to the emergence of spaces in which this *phantasmatic violence* has become idiosyncratic. This is a form of violence in which the subjectivity of the aggressor is full of ambivalence,



contradiction and spaces of dislocation and symbolical restitution which resist a conventional interpretation based on a binary analysis. It is a kind of violence in which the perpetrator and the victim have motivations that do not always coincide with the polarized rationale of class clashes or with larger sociopolitical and cultural conflicts. *Phantasmatic violence* is linked to the national history of authoritarianism, and as such, offers ways to resolve interpersonal and group conflicts that are the indirect result of internal war and social inequality. In many aspects, the unease expressed by phantasmatic violence is close to the “rage of the colonial world in revolt,” which Fanon referred to when analyzing the various roles that the masses can play in national liberation processes. In this respect, it is worth noting the way in which the Guatemalan masses, grouped into *maras territoriales*, has in many cases—just as happened in Indonesia—united with the organized crime networks that evolved from the counter-insurgent apparatus which still subsists within the State<sup>207</sup>.

### ***Maras Territoriales***

The overlapping of the *maras estudiantiles* and *maras territoriales*, which also occurred in El Salvador (and the later international attention given to the latter, as in the case of the “*Mara Salvatrucha*”) seems to be one of the factors that has had the most influence in the criminalization of unemployed youth, of middle and high school students and of the

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<sup>207</sup> In spite of the comic tone, it is probably Quiroa who has been able to portray with greater precision the idiosyncratic characteristics of this process. *Las maras*,” says Quiroa, “han invadido todos los sectores de la sociedad sin respetar el nivel académico, filiación política, clase social, linaje aristocrático o pureza de sangre. Son multiétnicas según convenga, pluriabusadas en pagar con pisto del vecino y multidisciplinarias cortando parejo. Dentro del libre juego democrático ejercen la matatusa; el tatuaje visible, oculto o todo lo contrario, y siguen al pie del octavo el sabio mandamiento practicado en los oscuros pasillos de la casona de la novena avenida y corredores palaciegos: el que parpadea paga y bebe de último. Este variopinto mundo de las maras es como la viña del colochón: hay de tocho morocho para escoger. También existen maras gruesas entrándole de a gordo a secuestros forci voluntarios, fugas increíbles desde las puertas del mismísimo infierno escuintleco, cambio de dueños de vehículo sin pedir permiso y reparto de nieve colombiana por gramo, onza, kilo y tonelada, en trailer o a granel. Maritas rascuaches de nivel parvulario especialistas en pasar el dos de bastos en camiochatarras y apretazones o puyar con tortilla tiesa en oscuranas marginales por donde el cachudo perdió el celular, la chamarra y el carne del partido de la manita”.

young people of the barrios and working-class neighborhoods. However, it is the territorial *marero*, rather than his student counterpart, who possesses all the attributes abhorred by the racist supremacy in Guatemala. Among territorial *mareros*, the gang *marero* is usually addicted to alcohol, crack cocaine, marihuana, or inhalants, and uses violence to intimidate, rob, or kill. It is evident that the rise in violent crime attributed to young people identified as *mareros*, *cholos* or gang members has fueled the public demand across social classes for hard disciplinarian measures to eradicate *mareros* and perform a social cleansing such as General Ríos Mott did after the military coup of March 23, 1982, which greatly favored his political career<sup>208</sup>.

### From *Shumos* to *Caqueros*

To show the confluence of racism and classism within Guatemalan society, I examine the opinions of a group of young men and women. From these opinions, there

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<sup>208</sup> According to a report about the maras made by the Association for the Advancement of Social Sciences in Guatemala (Avanco), at the end of the 1980s the social profile of the average *marero* was: young (less than 20 years old), born and raised in the city, literate and with some schooling, from a lower or middle-class family, unemployed, but with a history of several poorly paid jobs, an habitual drug user who steals in order to have drug money, from a dysfunctional, unstable family, with violent, uncommunicative or alcoholic parents or stepparents and bad school experiences. "A distinctive characteristic which helps understand the *marero* psychology that most of them see no hope in the future." Avanco did not approach the ethnic-racial factor in this study; however, today it can be observed that even though there is a symbolic distinction in the metasociological place that corresponds to the "*mara*," the "*student maras*" and the *territorial maras*, the new cultural codes adopted by many young people as a result of international migration have favored an increase in *anti-cholero*, *anti-shumo* y *anti-muco* sentiments that reinforce the classist perceptions of urban geography and criminalizes the impoverished indigenous majority. In November 2002, the Ministry of State calculated there were about 500 *maras* in the nation, with about 50 thousand members (20% of them women) between the ages of 12 and 22. The Pastoral Social del Arzobispado and the Casa Alianza report that about 15 % of all members are between the ages of 23 and 30. Many *mareros* live in settlements such as the area of El Mezquital, where almost half of the residents are under the age of 15 and where the adults work as construction workers, drivers, car mechanics, factory workers, small merchants, tortilla vendors, domestic servants, nurses and sales people. The residents refer to the groups of youngsters linked to criminal acts as "*maras*," "*cholos*," "*bolos*" and "*delincuentes*." Each *mara* has codes, symbols and language that distinguishes it from other *maras*, and they all have territorial influences. Disputes and clashes related to the defense or control of the territory are frequent. Violence increases during the weekends, when people cash their weekly payments and the consumption of alcohol both among adults and younger people is greater. When the Avanco researchers asked children between 10 and 12 years old what could be done to stop violence, some of their responses were: "kill the thieves," "carry guns," "better kill *mareros* because in jail they learn things from other criminals." An adult man from Santa Cruz Chínautla, another community where there is a great number of young people involved in *maras*, says that "almost all families here have children who are members of those groups. If I try collecting signatures, half the neighborhood will be against me." Violence in the settlements is usually drug-related: burglary, hold-ups on buses and delivery vehicles, arms dealing, rape, sexual abuse by the parents or other relatives, violence between neighbors or relatives and between rivaling *maras*.

emerges a taxonomy that divides the population in a hierarchy which has, on one side, *shumos*, *mucos* and *choleros*, and on the other, *normal* people, *fresas* and *caqueros*.

Ernesto Alvarado attends a lower-class private high school, where he is studying to become an accountant. He says: “anyone with no dough is *shumo*.” “Anyone who is not *mara caquera*, who speaks rough, and swears a lot, especially around girls, is *shumo*. *Shumos* want everything, but they are nothing. According to Ernesto’s definition, about three quarters of the population of Guatemala, “those who have no dough,” would fit the definition of *shumo*, and are therefore not “*mara caquera*,” or what in Guatemalan Spanish dialect means “gente llena de mierdas”. To speak roughly and swear a lot is another feature that would make *shumos* out of a large part of the population who use “malas palabras” and share the macho and homophobic culture contained in them. Ernesto’s definition of *shumo* as those who are not *caqueros* shows a criticism of social climbing, of those who presume a higher social standing than that which their neighbors see in them, those who want everything, but are nothing.

Nancy Guzmán, who is a senior high school student at the Liceo Escocés, says that the word *shumo* “refers to Indian, but is much worse than Indian”. “*Shumos*”, says Albertina Rodriguez, who studies at the School of Commerce, “can be distinguished from the rest by the way they talk, the way they walk, you can tell they are indigenous, also because of their physical features, that’s why people say, Ah, that’s a *shumito*.” However, even though it is synonymous with “Indian,” the word *shumo* is used when a person has attitudes that are not accepted by the group, so that you tell someone, ‘Ach, you are being so *shumo*, you are pure *shumo*,’ that is, you are saying they are indians, although maybe the attitude had nothing to do with indigenous peoples, but it is still a way of insulting someone”. Carmen Salazar, who is in the last year of teachers training at the Insitute of

Señoritas Belén, thinks that you call *shumos* “people who are stubborn. A *shumo* is someone who, when you ask them to do something, they won’t do it, or you’ll say ‘do such and such,’ they will do the opposite.” In these definitions a *shumo* is an Indian who gives himself away because of his phenotype, his way of speaking, walking or his “stubbornness.” Calling someone *shumo* is worse than calling them *Indio*, and it may be used when someone is being stubborn or assumes an attitude of which the group disapproves. This stubbornness is a stereotyped construction which, together with the laziness, drunkenness, idolatry, dirtiness, and austere lifestyle, was attributed by colonial mentality to many of the peoples and cultures in the periphery of the European and North American world.

*Shumo* stubbornness and contrariness can even be exemplified, for example, in the clothes someone wears. Once I mentioned to Albertina that a student of the Colegio Irlandés had told me that only *shumos* use T-shirts with the picture of Ché Guevara, and she responded that “He probably says that because he thinks a lot of himself. He thinks he’s the best. A *shumo* is an indigenous person, and that is the word most often used to discriminate against them. ‘Ah, that’s a *shumo*.’ It’s a word that denigrates indigenous people, but you can use it with non-indigenous people as well, supposing you are wearing a Ché T-shirt and they say, ‘look he wears that shirt. Ah, well, its so *shumo*.’ So it means you are imitating them”. Eduardo Ramirez, who just finished his high school, explains the relation between being *shumo*, dressing style and Che Guevara: “The young people who wear clothes with his (Che Guevara’s) image are those who are *shumos* to some extent, and they shouldn’t dress like that. Why? Because he (Ché Guevara) was someone who was against his nation’s policies. So now that is like having a T-shirt with the picture of... who? I’m sure there are T-shirts of Osama bin Laden, and why? Because he was against the United States, he

rebelled against them. So this *muco* or *shumo* or whatever you call this person of little culture likes to always be contrary. ‘Look, come at seven’ you say. So he arrives at six thirty Why? Because he was told to come at seven. They are rebels, but not the good kind who want to make things better, but rebels who are against everything and who aren’t happy with anything.” Rebelliousness as normal behavior associated with dress style is a factor that appears frequently in the critical opinions of young people who consider themselves “normal” or “intermediate” against *shumos*, *mucos* and *choleros*. This rebelliousness is projected not only among the young people stigmatized as *shumos*, *mucos* or *choleros*, but on *mareros* as well<sup>209</sup>.

Daniel Sanchez, who studies radio and TV repair at the Technical Vocational Institute says *muco* “means poor,” and *shumo* “means natural” these are “discriminatory words that people use, like *indio* and *cholero*” Ernesto Santizo, senior student at a lower-middle class private school in the Zona 1 says that “*Mucos* are all thieves. Most *mucos* are indigenous. A *muco* and a *shumo* are the same shit, although a *shumo* might just fuck around and a *muco* is most surely a *marero* or *largo*. Both are *mara* that don’t give a fuck about anything, they don’t carry a cell phone or designer clothes. They just like to fuck around. These *mucos* don’t go to school, or if they do it’s just to give everyone a pain in the ass”<sup>210</sup>. Ursula Herrera, a senior math-physics student at one of the most expensive schools

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<sup>209</sup> Nancy Fernández adds other elements to this context, also related to dress-style, which result in a multiple definition: “being *muco* is worse than being *cholero*. A *muco* is lowest in the ladder. Most are also *choleros* and are involved in *maras*, they use, you know, loose shirts, loose pants that reach to the knees, baseball caps put on backwards, and many bracelets. They even look dirty.” Ursula, also commenting on dress-style, says “if you go to Panajachel and you wear a traditional shirt, a cloth bag and a little hat you fit perfectly in the environment. But if you go to Jutiapa, this side from the East, you look all wrong if you dress like that. You look like a *muco*.” Although these descriptions put *mareros* who could be criminals down, there are many young men who attend public school and are not territorial *mareros* and much less criminals who dress with loose pants and shirts, Ché T-shirts and even Bin Laden T-shirts, bulky black shiny ankle boots with wide toes, such as José Manuel Valenzuela says *cholos* in Los Angeles and Tijuana wear. Nancy says that “you can tell *mucos* apart because they wear loose shirts, loose pants that reach to the knees, baseball caps put on backwards, and many bracelets..” You call someone *muco*, according to Eduardo “because he doesn’t dress like he is supposed to, like people our age dress.”

<sup>210</sup> This definition approaches *shumo*, *muco* and *marero* simultaneously and has at least eight elements that are worth

in Guatemala City talks about the *shumo* style of dressing and about the specific role of exaggeration, imitation, what she considers “bad taste,” and lack of “class” and the characteristic *shumo* over-doing of ornaments: “sometimes a person isn’t a complete *shumo*, but uses *shumo* things and you can say, ‘hey, you really are *shumo* with those shoes,’ or you know, the stickers in their car or some other detail. *Shumos*, says Ursula, are people who dress with no ‘class.’ “I don’t really know how to define ‘class.’ It’s like they want to imitate... maybe like Ladinos who want to imitate Americans, and the Indians who want to imitate Ladinos. It’s like an ugly way of being, no class whatsoever... again that word (class) you know, they want to wear designer jeans and all... how can I explain? I could tell you what a *shumo* looks like: loose pants, with big labels like this.”

In these characterizations and in the sanctions about what is appropriate for a person to wear according to their ethnic and class extraction, the transnational element complicates perceptions about difference and social, cultural and racial stratification with markers that have not appeared historically among those held by the vision of society as the indigenous-Ladino dichotomy. The particular *shumo*, *muco*, and *cholero* style to wear a T-shirt, an abundance of chains and bracelets, loose fitting pants, baseball caps, big shoes, boots, “traditional clothes,” the exaggerated use of ornaments, and body decoration, and their attire in general is very similar to the style preferred by young Latinos and Blacks in big U.S. cities. These repertoires have even been adapted by white youth as well, and in Guatemala’s socialization of classist and racist perceptions, Los Angeles has been explicitly defined as the *shumo* Mecca of the world, according to a document in circulation through

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highlighting 1) “*Mucos* are all thieves. Most *mucos* are indigenous.” 2) “Both are *mara*” 3) “A *muco* and a *shumo* are the same shit” 4) “They don’t give a fuck about anything” 5) “they don’t go to school, or if they do is just to give everyone a pain in the ass” 6) “they don’t carry a cell phone or designer clothes” and 7) most hang around the Zona 18 and the calle 18. Carmen says that “*muco* is just like *shumo*, but I think *shumo* is lower down. But it depends. People take it in different ways. But it is definitely offensive for anyone.”

the Internet called “Measure your SQ,” which we will look at in detail further on.

And so *mucos*, as well as *mareros* or national *cholos* are a manifestation of a transnationality that creates corridors through which circulate the goods, ideas, dress styles, music, handshake codes and other features of the ritual gregariousness which the young people who identify as “normal,” “bourgeois,” “*fresa*” and “*caquero*” reject. The presence of cultural codes which originate in the United States has stimulated the re-elaboration of markers which were previously considered the symbolic property of the middle and upper classes and the elite, and which are now used to stigmatize the young people who try to imitate them. The hierarchy in which consumption, consumer, product and place of consumption are ordered has become a new arena in which class frontiers, racial and cultural prejudices are negotiated —most of them relating to physical features or dress, as in the case of the *shumo* who wants to look like a skater, using prestigious designer jeans or having an Anglo name but the facial features of an Indian.

The perception is that *Shumos* and *Mucos* share the lack of “class,” “good taste” and musical preferences<sup>211</sup>. Regarding music, Eduardo established his own discotheque taxonomy in the *Zona Viva* of Guatemala City, which he understands as a microcosm where you can observe the whole social, class, racial, and cultural spectrum. “At the Zona Viva I could define for you the places where each kind of people goes and why the music they play there attracts them. The most cheerful place is the *mucos*’ because that’s where there it’s more lively. Well, it’s supposed to be cheerful. I don’t think that’s where you can have the best time, but it is the noisiest place. Like it or not that music is just noise, its noisy, and it seems people like to hear noise. That is the Saboy and the Khalúa, further

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<sup>211</sup> In agreement with Eduardo regarding music, but adding commentaries about cars, one of the most notable symbolic elements of anti-*shumo* sentiment, Ursula says “*their cars are always full of stickers and have a big exhaust pipe that goes bbbbbbfffffffffffff. That is so classic of some one you’d call shumo. But not all shumos have cars. But if a person sees something like that, they’d say, ‘ah, what a shumo car’ And the music, typical, top volume. They need speakers this size.*”

down. Then there's Scream where everyone dances only *trans* because the lights and all are for that type of thing, and that is not for *caquero* or *shumo* people, but for *intermediate* people. Then there is Level, which is not *muco* but close enough, and at the top there's Salambú, where I've never been but it's much like the Saboy and the Khalúa. At the top of the list you could put Sambuca which is where nice people go. There are also places for people who like heavy metal, others for people who like *fresa* music, they call them *fresas*. So there's a place for each kind. Also those who like *trans*. There are many other terms. I like all kinds of music, all except that vulgar *muco* music that brings nothing good. *Muco* music is, for example, Kripta. I don't know what that is but it just doesn't sound right to my ears. People are attracted to it because it sounds like a noise, they think it's curious, but it's not agreeable, this noise. But the rest of the music is all fine by me, there is a place to listen to each type. On Sixth avenue you see lots of *mucos* listening to their kind of music. Why? Because many of the people who live around there are like that, they like that music. Why? Because they are against something and maybe they don't even know against what they just want to be against something and the easiest thing is to be against the government. So what are they against? They aren't doing so well in business or anything else, they are against that. The thing is to be against. I think *mucos* are disoriented, confused. Maybe that is why everyone is against them. You can see that when you go to places like the zona 10, the Zona Viva or La Pradera."

Curiously, Eduardo's affirmation that the most cheerful place is the *mucos'* coincides with Ursula's statement that "people accuse others of being *shumos*, but they some times enjoy those *shumo* things (music) too." The recognition with interclass overtones that "the happiest place is the *mucos'*" and that the rest also enjoy *shumo* music is an example of the way in which "Guatemalan self-restraint" works. Eduardo and Ursula



leave this unexplained, projecting in its place a barbaric image of the *muco* crowds which contrasts with the environment of “fine” or cultured people. Eduardo thinks *muco* music “is just noise,” and it would seem that “people” enjoy it because being contrary is a way of breaking away from the normality imposed by the dominant conservatism, even though this temporary rupture does not interrupt the symbolic war or the spaces of hierarchical social reproduction of Guatemalan society<sup>212</sup>.

In a different approach to the social and racial hierarchies linked to music and style of dress, Daniel Sanchez, who is a senior student at the male-only Instituto Nacional para Varones says that being *shumo* “is being natural, and *muco* means poor. They are discriminatory terms, like *indio* or *cholero*.” Then, unexpectedly, he adds: “they are words that people use a lot at school, but girls use them most.” “The man who has power” says Daniel, “is the envy of others and the object of women’s ambition, so it is more common that they relate to a guy because of the car he drives or because of his money. Women have higher aspirations than men, and when they see something they covet they act enviously and compare, they see other guys who have less and they begin to rub it in their faces. Maybe that’s why.”

This unusual interpretation of what is *shumo* and *cholero* as a male critique of “women’s envy and big aspirations” shows the historical and cultural presence of what can be called memory of dispossession which exists in the mental universe of many impoverished Ladinos in Guatemala. From Daniel’s perspective, the discriminatory treatment implied in the terms *shumo* and *cholero* would be a hegemonic reminder of how the memory of dispossession of both symbolic and material goods refrains many

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<sup>212</sup> For Josefina, regarding music tastes, “there are those who like rock music, then there are *mucos*, and *normal* people who listen, let’s suppose, to Roberto Carlos and stuff like that.” The criteria to define what is “intermediate” and “normal” depend on the way in which normality is positioned against rebelliousness. Eduardo, for example, thinks that “It’s not *normal* to spend morning day and night listening to heavy metal rock music. That is not normal.”

impoverished Ladino and mestizo men from accessing the patriarchal power of being male, being master, being the white land-owner who owns the woman that wants to be part of his properties.

In general terms, the deep mechanism operating in the *cholerization* or *shumization* of the bulk of society is the repudiation of indigenous people and ordinary mestizos through hegemonic representations of whiteness encouraged by those who, thanks to their economical, racial or social power, have the ability to remind everyone else which place corresponds to them in the social and racial stratification that divides Guatemala. Nancy says that *cholero* “is a word to identify poor people, people who haven’t had the opportunities we had. We could say they are thieves, they are the people involved in the maras, drug addicts and all that. They are the *choleros*. The term *cholero* is used to denigrate, disqualify and stigmatize everything that is of “bad taste,” poor, inferior, vulgar or socially undesirable. These are characteristics that in the dominant mentality were attributed to indigenous people, particularly to indigenous and Ladino people who were employed as servants or in subordinate positions. *Cholero*, says Carmen, “is when you ask someone ‘look, do this thing’ and maybe you say please but they reply ‘who do you think you are, I am not your servant’ “That happens most when someone asks a favor and the other person replies, ‘Ah, no, they think I am the errand boy, the *cholero*.’ You can say that as a joke, not meaning to offend anyone, but there are people who do say it meaning disrespect, particularly to domestic service workers.” A *cholero* “is like an extremist, too funny, but not nice funny but you know, heavy.” “*Cholero*,” says Josefina, “it’s an insult used against indigenous people; even I use it sometimes. The other day I was arguing with another student because we were doing honors and when we were singing the anthem he was like bothering me, making jokes. I told him he was a *cholero* and he started insulting

me too. It's a way of insulting." The insult is a normal word, and saying that it's a joke, not meaning to offend, is similar to other justifications such as saying it for fun, or the explicit note that the words are not meant to insult any racial, cultural or social group that appears in documents such as the *Cholerimetro* or the *Shumometro*, which we will analyze later on. Carmen says, "Sometimes you say 'Ach how *muco*.' But even that word is used by *muco* people. Sometimes I use it to bother someone, but not meaning to offend. It depends on how you get on with people, maybe you call them names and they smile or something. But if you use it with someone you don't know well it can be very offensive."

At a general level, both *shumos* and *mucos* have in common being indigenous, looking indigenous or having indigenous surnames. However, being *muco* is more denigrating than being *cholero*, although there is a plane of interlocution and stigmatization in which terms intersect and people who are *caqueros* can at the same time be *mucos*. This contrast of *muco* being closer to *caquero* by inversion is formulated by Carmen as follows: "Some use it to call people who think a lot of themselves, who think they are a big thing." Calling "*muco*" the one who "thinks he is a big thing" is a symbolic inversion that criticizes the social climbing or ostentation of someone who "wants to pass for something he is not." *Mucos* are the lowest sector, the bottom rung in the ladder of Guatemalan hierarchies, and the most openly *phantasmatic*. Here again in action are the unwritten norms which sanction the place each deserves to take in the socio-racial hierarchy. This critique of social climbing is mixed with racist aspects, but often if the case is Ladinos speaking of other Ladinos, the verbal violence and aggression will be less than if the subject were an indigenous person, an indigenous person in the process of Ladinoization, or an indigenous person whose economic or political power places him or her above Ladinos and other indigenous people. Or is young indigenous people and mestizos who live in

settlements or neighborhoods where the crime rate is high and who are part of the masses of individuals who are disposable or criminalizable just by the way they look, their economic or cultural condition, or where they live. For them there is no place in the job market, not even as cheap labor for export agriculture or for the *maquila* industry.

Probably one of the most notable new features of these classist and socio-racist taxonomies is the gregariousness which characterizes *mucos* and *choleros* in particular, and which in the dominant imaginary transforms them into criminals and *mareros*. However, although *mucos* and *choleros* are or can be *mareros*, there are some perspectives in which *shumos*, *mucos* and *choleros* are ubiquitous and trans-classist characters who act as agents of disturbance of a symbolic order defended by the *normales* or intermediates. *Normales* are those who are neither *shumos* nor *caqueros*, but something in between. And so, *muco* is not just the person who lives in the settlements; the *muco* cultural universe can be projected in other areas of social and youth life in Guatemala.

Although *muco*, *shumo* and *cholero* are racist and classist classifications used to humiliate indigenous people and “ordinary” people with “dark skin”, it can be said that they are also incarnations of the space of the non-white mestizo and of the mestizo process denied by whiteness and made invisible by the Indian-Ladino dichotomy. *Shumos*, *choleros* and *mucos*, as the indigenous, are denied by the elite and by the system of representation which glorifies racial *pureness*, in particular that of the “pure white” and the “pure indian.” “To be indian, but a pure indian,” says a caller who identifies himself as Mayan to the audience of “*Casos y cosas*,” (Cases and Things) a radio program with open telephone lines at radio Sonora (11-04.2002) Or “To be indian, but with class,” says a lady who also claims to be Mayan in “*Buenas Noches, Buenos Días*,” which also broadcasts the same radio station (07.05.2003). This positive valuing of racial and cultural *pureness*

associated with the “class” possessed by those who are not members of the elite shows how the repudiation of mestizos happens also from below, from the position of indigenous people who consider themselves “pure.” The shame of mestizo *impurity*, whether indigenous, Black, Asian or just dark-skinned (also fostered, often unconsciously, by national and foreign anthropologists) is in opposition to the cult of “eugenic mixing” to “better the race,” and is one of the main reasons why there is not a mestizo pride that might be able to propitiate the institutional development of a national culture which recognizes indigenous, Black and Asian heritage.

### ***El sentimiento anti-ladino and el respeto al canche***

“Los que dijeron que un *canche* no iba a trabajar con los pobres, están arrepentidos de no ser panistas”, Arabella Castro al referirse al gobierno de Alvaro Arzú durante la proclamación de Oscar Berger como candidato a la presidencia por el Partido de Avanzada Nacional, Prensa Libre, 28 de junio de 1999

“Yo no le tengo miedo ese *canchito*”  
Alfonso Portillo, candidato presidencial del Frente Republicano Guatemalteco al referirse a Oscar Berger, Prensa Libre, 18 de julio 1999

“Fíjese usted que el otro día allí donde dan las licencias para manejar, llegó un señor de apariencia extranjera se coló y nadie le dijo nada, ni siquiera el policía”, R.G. Ciudad de Guatemala, z. 10

“Existen diferencias claras, porque la mezcla del alemán con indio es más pura, mas sana, porque la raza española no era pura, por eso el indio mezclado es mas perverso y haragán”, Mujer de 45 años, ama de casa, casada con un industrial y que se considera a si misma blanca (Casaús 1998:63-64)

In Guatemala, the non-*shumo*, white and pro-white Ladino population form a very small minority. Yet, they leave only a narrow space for social, material and symbolic mobility for other Guatemalan citizens. Nevertheless, the hegemonic power of this minority’s representations, related to values of authoritarianism, the racialization of inequality, and Whiteness, strangle the development of citizenship. These values reverberate among the impoverished middle-classes and the working classes who consider

themselves Ladinos or non-indigenous, particularly in urban centers.

Nothing generates as much dark humor and symbolic representations among the elite and its ideological allies of the middle-class and non-indigenous popular sectors, as racist and classist jokes that denigrate the indigenous majority. Although in the latter case, it might be preferable to be “Ladino pobre en lugar de indio, “ser indio puro”, “indio pero de clase”; but never *shumo* o *cholero*, the prestige of values of white supremacy increase the importance of being or appearing to be European or North American of white of Nordic origen<sup>213</sup>.

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<sup>213</sup> A propósito de las contradicciones y ambigüedades de la supremacía, el *mestizaje indígena* y el *mestizaje eugenésico*, el ser mestizo, blanco, Ladino o guatemalteco, Josefina dice que en Guatemala “mestizo es cuando supóngase que un indígena, una persona o un guatemalteco se vino a casar con un alemán o un estadounidense. Los hijos ya son mestizos. Yo soy mestiza por el hecho de que no soy completamente más morena y que mis apellidos supuestamente son mejores. Supuestamente desciendo de indígenas y de españoles, pero desde hace mucho tiempo, desde la conquista de Guatemala”. ¿Y cuáles son tus apellidos? Hernández Girón. A mí me dijeron, no sé si eso sea cierto, que los apellidos que terminan en z, son judíos. Algo así me dijeron. No sé”. Ser blanco, sin embargo, dice Josefina, se refiere a esas personas que no son de acá. Si se da cuenta todos los guatemaltecos somos así morenos, sin embargo los blancos se toman como mejores personas que nosotros, y siempre se les da más mérito a ellos por su propio color, aunque no tengan nada mejor que nosotros”. Por lo que respecta a ser Ladino, “esa es una palabra que yo casi no la uso. No la he usado y pocas veces la he oído. Al menos aquí en el colegio no he oído decir a nadie que es un Ladino, o decirle a alguien ‘sos un Ladino’ o algo así, esa palabra yo casi no la uso”. Probablemente la dinámica social y familiar de Josefina hacen que para ella ladino sea un término en desuso. Sus ancestros del lado materno proceden de la zona del lago de Amatitlán y ella, por lo que dice, pareciera estar mas familiarizada con otros tipos de mestizaje. Al contrario de Josefina que nunca ha oído la palabra ladino y asume el *mestizaje eugenésico* de los morenos y la importancia de sus apellidos “judíos”; Nancy dice que “los ladinos son la mezcla entre los indios y una persona no india. Así como nosotros, supuestamente somos Ladinos porque venimos de naturales y españoles. Ladinos prácticamente naturales ya no hay, sólo hay mestizos. Algunos guatemaltecos no se identifican como Ladinos porque se supone que son descendientes de personas europeas, pero si hay bastantes personas en Guatemala que son Ladinas”. Al hablar de los Ladinos prácticamente naturales pareciera que Nancy se refiere a los Ladinos que reivindican un parentesco directo con las primeras generaciones de españoles e indígenas coloniales. Este parentesco tendría una jerarquía simbólica superior a la de los mestizos contemporáneos que son mezcla de indígenas con Ladinos y afro-descendientes. Y en relación a los guatemaltecos “que no se identifican como Ladinos porque se supone que son descendientes de personas europeas”, Nancy amplía este enfoque cuando se refiere a la opresión de los indígenas, y el “egoísmo” de los “ricos” que no son de “pura sangre guatemalteca” sino descendientes de “generaciones extranjeras”. “La sociedad guatemalteca, dice Nancy, está completamente dividida en indígenas, negros, ricos y pobres. La sociedad está dividida y lo malo es que cada quien sólo mira por lo propio y no se preocupa por los demás. Yo pienso que la mayoría de personas que están en el poder es porque son egoístas, porque es algo así como que los ricos ya están contados, ya están cabales, y nadie más puede entrar allí. Entonces por eso no dejan que los indígenas salgan adelante, siempre quieren tenerlos debajo del zapato, y nunca los van a dejar salir adelante y los indígenas siempre van a estar así. No hay alguna forma en la que ellos puedan progresar porque los ricos son de generaciones extranjeras que llevan sangre europea, sangre gringa. Esos son. Por eso es que no dejan que ningún guatemalteco de pura sangre guatemalteca entre”. Esta apreciación de la “sociedad guatemalteca” como un espacio en donde de da un enfrentamiento de sangres; la “sangre europea, gringa” de los “ricos” descendientes de “generaciones extranjeras” y la “pura sangre guatemalteca” que está excluida del círculo que controla la riqueza; muestra un espíritu nacionalista y clasista que sin embargo, no rompe con el purismo racialista que valora positivamente la “sangre” europea, gringa y criolla y sigue siendo un importante sostén de la blancura hegemónica. Y es que a menudo, estas percepciones reflejan una nosotrosidad nacionalista que no elimina necesariamente el “respeto al canche”; que una empresaria de bienes raíces me hizo notar a propósito del capital simbólico que acompaña a las personas de “apariencia extranjera” en sus gestiones públicas y privadas en Guatemala

With the exception of the pioneering studies of Amanda Pop Bol, little research has been conducted in Guatemala on children and teenagers' socialization of prejudice and stereotypes. The socialization in school among indigenous, whites and Ladinos<sup>214</sup>, and in other public spaces, such as markets, buses and parks, occurs in an asymmetric way, generally to the disadvantage of indigenous peoples<sup>215</sup>. Cultural markers, such as phenotype, birth place, or the use of regional clothing or language<sup>216</sup>, are associated with a

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<sup>214</sup> Josefina por ejemplo, dice que las compañeras indígenas con quienes estudió "eran un poco más reservadas que el resto. Bueno ahora ya no, ahora son más abiertas. Eran así bien tranquilas, uno les hablaba pero ellas no le hablaban a uno, cosas así. Pero se hacían burlas en los salones de clase, bastante fuertes y enfrente de ellas. Supóngase que a veces estábamos hablando y como teníamos una compañera de Quetzaltenango, yo decía "ah como yo soy de Quetzaltenango no conozco la televisión". Cosas así, no muy ofensivas porque al menos nosotros no nos pasábamos, pero si he escuchado insultos bastante grandes".

<sup>215</sup> Nancy por ejemplo dice que usualmente tiene relación cotidiana con personas indígenas, "en las tortillerías que hay por mi casa y en varias tiendas en que despachan 'inditos' y cuando pasan vendiendo escobas o algo así". Dice Nancy que "a mucha gente no le gusta salir los domingos porque según ellos 'los domingos sólo los inditos salen'. Van al parque central, a la sexta avenida, a un salón de baile que se llama Megatrón, aquí frente a la biblioteca sobre la octava calle, allí vienen a bailar. Hay otro también sobre la avenida Bolívar que se llama Guatemala Musical. También los fines de semana se juntan en las cafeterías chinas a tomar y a conseguir patojas". En un horizonte semejante de convivencia vertical con los indígenas Carmen dice que en ocasiones escucha a los indígenas platicando en la camioneta. "Van ahí platicando, a veces en español, a veces en lengua. Hay veces en que si se oye (entre la gente Ladina) que porque son indígenas no los van a aceptar o que se van a sentir mal porque están con personas que no son de la misma cultura o sea quiera que no, uno si lo puede aceptar." Las camionetas de transporte público son particularmente abundantes en hechos delictivos incluyendo asesinatos y todo tipo de interacciones en las que se manifiesta el "racismo popular" de los ladinos. "En las camionetas empiezan a burlarse de uno como habla, dice Leticia. Nos empezamos a reír de ellos, pobres ilusos porque no saben nada"

<sup>216</sup> Un día sin que viniera mucho al caso en la conversación Josefina me dijo que "en Guatemala se estudia para servir a otros". ¿Y eso que tiene que ver con el racismo?, le pregunté. "Ah, el racismo", se respondió sola. "El racismo, aquí en Guatemala, tiene usted el hecho de que los indígenas son tratados como indios y se les hace mucho a un lado. Se cree que ellos no pueden con las cosas que nosotros podríamos y se les discrimina mucho en el trabajo y en la política. Por ejemplo a personas como Rosalina Tuvuc, la denigran mucho a pesar de que es muy buena persona, tiene muy buena ideología y sus pautas son buenas. Más sin embargo siempre se le denigra porque es indígena, porque usa *traje*". Se le denigra "porque usa *traje*". El uso del idioma indígena y del *traje* regional son marcadores de inferioridad dentro y fuera del salón de clase. "En secundaria tuve a una compañera que era indígena", dice Nancy. Siempre muy reservada, demasiado tímida, tal vez ermitaña, no le gustaba relacionarse con la gente. Yo no le hablaba directamente, pero si me dejaba en que pensar la actitud de ella. Siempre iba con su corte a la escuela y se sentía mal pienso yo porque todos se le quedaban viendo porque llevaba *corte*. Me imagino que en algún momento se ha de haber avergonzado de andar con *corte*. El resto de las otras compañeras se alejaban de ella, no le hablaban. Yo no era amiga de ella pero si la saludaba y de vez en cuando platicábamos. No fuimos amigas pero los demás si me daba cuenta que la menospreciaban y eso era muy evidente". En relación a la conciencia del *traje* o del *corte* como marcador de frontera, diferencia e inferioridad cultural. "En Guatemala, dice Nancy, "obviamente todos llevamos sangre indígena, pero (blancos) (somos) todos los que no llevamos *corte*. Es una forma de generalizar porque hay ladinos que niegan sus raíces indígenas y no usan su *traje* que es lo que deberían de llevar. Una mi tía incluso estuvo casada con un hombre que su familia era indígena, pero él yo no sé por que razón ya no usaba esa ropa, pero se notaba que era "indito". La familia de él siempre andaba con *corte* y muy orgullosos de lo que eran. Conozco varias personas así. He visto que si pueden funcionar ese tipo de relaciones pero cuesta porque cada quien tiene sus creencias e intereses religiosos, políticos o sociales. Porque digamos en una pareja de un hombre y una mujer indígena, la mujer está muy orgullosa de usar su *corte* y tal vez al hombre hay ocasiones en que le molesta que ella lo utilice o al revés que a la mujer le moleste algo del hombre indígena." Amarilis, estudiante del último año de magisterio, cakchiquel de San José Poaquil, Chimaltenango, recuerda que "habían días en que me sentía así alegre y si quería venir (a la escuela) y otros días en que me daba miedo porque como era sola no quería venir. Uno así no se siente tan bien y peor que yo era de allá (de San José Poaquil, Chimaltenango), no me sentía bien en el ambiente de aquí. Aquí es muy diferente. Yo compartía con mis amigos allá y me llevaba bien con ellos y tal vez porque los conocía a ellos

level of inferiority that is crudely revealed in daily interactions and intercultural relations of friendship, courtship<sup>217</sup> and marriage<sup>218</sup>. In a hierarchical society like that of Guatemala, young adults, of both genders, move within a context of prejudice and stereotypes that consumer society and the global and the national social-racial hierarchy imposes on them<sup>219</sup>.

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yo me sentía mejor y como con más valor pero al venir acá yo me sentía muy tímida. Me costó bastante superar esa timidez y todavía ahora soy muy tímida pero así poco a poco porque al pasar a exponer o hacer otras cosas con mis compañeras ya fui conociendo, tuve amigas y poco a poco fui desenvolviéndome”. Leticia que al igual que Amarilis usa su traje regional y también es cakchiquel dice: “Aquí (en el instituto) si uno es pilas, cabeza, buen estudiante, le hablan, pero si no, saber no te conozco. Pero gracias a Dios nosotras si hemos encontrado amigas también. A mi no me gusta ser líder. No sé pero yo al principio cuando llegué aquí pensé que todas eran bien inteligentes que entregaban buenos trabajos pero no es así”.

<sup>217</sup> Siempre en el contexto de las sensibilidades a propósito de la amistad, la discriminación y el matrimonio, Josefina dice que “Una vez, una de mis compañeras indígenas que tiene veinte años me contó que una señora le preguntó que por qué no se había casado ya, que las indígenas sólo servían para criar hijos, y que por qué estaba estudiando, que mejor se casara. Creo que es una forma bastante grande de discriminar. Por el hecho de que es mujer y es indígena, ¿piensan que uno tiene que casarse pronto”.

<sup>218</sup> Según Carmen “lo único que cambia tal vez es que ellos se visten de distinta forma que uno pero la verdad es que es normal, es una relación normal. Son comunes las relaciones entre indígenas y no indígenas y es porque se vienen de los departamentos a trabajar o a vivir aquí, se conocen y cambian. Se ha visto incluso que personas de otros países se casan con algún indígena, eso se mira bastante”. Josefina dice que en cuanto a parejas de amigos indígenas y no indígenas “eso es bastante. Novios poco y esposos menos todavía. Porque supóngase si hay un hombre bastante atractivo, por su físico va a decir yo no voy a salir con ella, que van a pensar de mí. Y por el lado del pensar indígena el hombre indígena va a decir, ella no me va a aceptar porque yo soy más chiquito y morenito que ella”. “Cuando una compañera o compañero se consigue una novia o novio indígena, dice Nancy, los demás los miran con desprecio y rechazo y eso va a ser así mientras no exista una igualdad de derechos”. En las relaciones de noviazgo depende, dice Ursula, porque hay chavos a los que de plano les gustan las *canchitas*, pero también hay otros a los que les gustan las *morenas*. Aunque siento que aquí en Guatemala pegan más las *canchitas* pero por ejemplo me hicieron un comentario: Una amiga de mi hermano que viajó a España me dijo que allá cuando ella entraba en algún lugar le decían: “Oye morena, que no sé qué...” y que hay un pegue total para las *morenas*. Eso me lo contó ella. Pienso que lo que menos hay es lo que más codician”. En esa misma dimensión de lo racial, lo cultural y lo romántico, Gabriela dice que “aquí en Guatemala, también yo me he dado cuenta que rechazan a los *chinos*, pero es porque cuando le dicen “chino” a una persona se les viene a la mente: “maquila”, “explotación para las personas”, entonces rechazan a los *chinos*. Pero también hay otro tipo de mentalidad, que dice: “Ah, los *chinos* son gente culta”, pensando en los *chinos* que viven en Asia, o que viven en China. Si piensan en los *chinos* que viven acá son explotadores. Es diferente. Si alguien por ejemplo, quisiera entablar una relación romántica o de atracción pienso que preferirían con un *chino* que con un *negro*, por como son las cosas verdad? Tal vez la historia. En Guatemala primero dicen que los *negros* son haraganes por Puerto Barrios, todo eso, que no les gusta trabajar. También dicen que son ladrones. O sea tienen muchas cosas así: ladrones o haraganes, no es muy bueno, como quien dice. En cambio de *chino* todavía hay la posibilidad de que si es un *chino* de Asia, puede ser un *chino* culto, un *chino* trabajador. Esa es la diferencia”.

<sup>219</sup> Como parte de la socialización de creencias y actitudes que contribuyen a formar conciencia de la diferencia y de la desigualdad entre otros muchos marcadores y condiciones que definen los procesos identitarios entre los jóvenes estudiantes de las capas medias y populares de Guatemala, fuera y dentro del salón de clase, aparece en los marcadores mencionados por un grupo de estudiantes del Instituto Nacional Central para Varones, predominantemente ladinos de extracción popular, para quienes es importante si en cualquier interacción o interpelación cotidiana, se es *moreno*, *canche*, indígena, ladino, no indígena, guatemalteco, rico, pobre, departamental, el más “chaparro”, el más alto, el más estudioso, el más “jodón”, el más “grillo”, el que mejor juega fútbol, el más “bolo”, el único que fuma “mota”, el que más “traidas” tiene, al que no le cae nada, el que tiene el papá más “pura mierda”, el único “indio”, el que tiene apellidos indígenas pero es uno de los que tiene más “pisto”, el que más conoce el interior del país, el que más ha viajado fuera del país, el que tiene más familiares en los Estados Unidos, el que tiene parientes militares, el que tiene familiares que estuvieron en la guerrilla, el más pobre, el que su mamá trabaja en el mercado, el que tiene familiares ladrones, el que tiene familiares en el “bote”, el que vive más lejos del instituto, el que vive más cerca, el único que fuma o el que más fuma, el que es hijo de



Within this context, the “*respeto al canche*” is a result of the mutual hatred of whites towards Ladinos and Ladinos towards whites. This strange combination of ambiguity and contradictions of whiteness in Guatemala has always been expressed in unusual and surprising ways. This is reflected in the way in which the perspective of the white foreigner shapes hierarchies of cultural consumption, as well as definitions of what is to be considered indigenous, colonial or Guatemalan. An example of this colonized perception is the sarcastic definition of a huipil as “aquella prenda que visten las mujeres (Ladinas, criollas o blancas) que quieren parecer gringas”. Superior status is given to the white foreigner’s curiosity for “lo típico”, colonial architecture, the “mayas arqueológicos” and ecology<sup>220</sup>.

#### Myths about whiteness, *respeto al canche* and *gringo* prestige do not stop at

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padres divorciados, el que es evangélico, el que vive en casa de dos pisos, el que vive en “champa” o en “covacha”, el más gordo, el más apodero, el que mejor chifla, el más malcriado, el mejor orador, el más “huevo” y “retranquero”, el más “chivero”, el más “pajero”, el único que tiene un diente de oro, el más “sholco”, el único que tiene hermanas mayores de cuarenta años, el que más hermanas tiene o el que tiene hermanas más bonitas, el único que sabe manejar carro, el único que llega en motocicleta, el único que sabe bastante inglés o el que tiene internet en su casa.

<sup>220</sup> Por eso, “como los gringos vienen a Panajachel y aprecian lo típico, aaahhh ya los guatemaltecos también aprecian Panajachel”, dice Ursula Villanueva. “Es como que ‘a los gringos les gustó, también a los guatemaltecos les gusta’. Todo por parecerse a los gringos. Es lo mismo que le he dicho antes: Se van a la Antigua porque a los gringos les gusta. Como vieron que a los gringos les atrae la Antigua, pusieron discos, restaurantes, un montón de cosas y ni modo, los guatemaltecos quieren ir allí especialmente a las discos. Ellos quisieran ser gringos. Son los estereotipos como quien dice: Canche, ojos claros, alto. Eso lo ven bonito entonces sienten como que ya, el rechazo al indio. Quieren ser como ellos. Intentan y ya con el hecho de intentarlo, ya se sienten gringos. No es frustración sino es que ellos ya sienten que son gringos. Se pintan el pelo, lentes de contacto o qué se yo. Aunque no es que ellos vayan a decir ‘yo quiero ser gringo’. Si alguien les dice así ‘vos querés ser gringo’, no lo aceptan, pero realmente en su interior, sí”. En esa misma línea de admiración por lo “gringo” o lo “canche”, Beatriz Alvarez recuerda como vivió la socialización de las jerarquías en las etapas mas tempranas de su educación: “Yo me acuerdo que cuando estaba en primero o segundo primaria así pequeña, ‘ay!, ese parece indio’. Desde pequeños se oye eso: la ridiculización para el ... (indio).... Y como que la admiración es más para los canchitos, blanquitos y ojitos claros. La mayoría desearían ser así. Si usted ve, todos los anuncios ponen niños canchitos y no ponen un niño así como que morenito, pelo liso”. Elaborando sobre el origen de esa admiración local por el fenotipo “gringo”, Josefina dice que “los mismos medios de comunicación lo bombardean a uno con información de que los gringos son lo mejor. Incluso le meten a uno en la cabeza que la raza superior son los gringos y que nosotros siempre vamos a ser un país subdesarrollado y que el hombre y la mujer ideal son: Altos de 1.80 m., ojos azules, blancos, rubios, o sea gringos. Eso es lo que pasa. Y es que la gente también se ha dejado influenciar por eso y han utilizado la publicidad subliminal para engañarla. Por lo que hemos visto en la televisión, ellos hacen esos mismos programas y todo eso a su favor; ellos se pintan como buenas personas, se pintan como una raza superior. Entonces uno lo cree y piensa que ellos efectivamente son una raza superior y uno no es nada a la par de ellos, por su porte, ellos son más altos, más fuertes y todo eso. Sí usted se da cuenta, a veces uno se sube a una camioneta y el chofer lleva allí pegada la bandera de Estados Unidos, ¿por qué no lleva la de nosotros?, esa es mi pregunta, porque la influencia de Norteamérica es tan grande que cargan banderas de Estados Unidos en sus playeras, en las camionetas. Es muy difícil cambiar eso por la edad que ya tenemos nosotros, la influencia que está entrando en los que vienen detrás y la que ya dejaron los que van delante de nosotros. Está difícil, no creo que se pueda. A lo mejor sólo educando a los más pequeños para que nuestra generación se vaya acabando y ellos empiecen con nuevas ideas”.

phenotype. They vindicate the conservative spirit of radical individualism, social darwinism, anti-communism, neoliberalism, the culture of money, and the entitlement of those members of society, who, based on ideologies of the survival of the fittest or personal merit, effort or birth, have the right to belong to a privileged planetary minority. In that respect, being or looking like a stereotypical “gringo”, whether North American or European, continue to be a powerful point of reference in the organization of symbolic hierarchies in Guatemala.

For example, Antonio Echeverría, a student at the Liceo Benjamin Franklin, spoke of the contradictions and ambiguities surrounding the concept of racial *purity* and the various attitudes towards *mestizaje indigena* and *mestizaje eugenésico* in relation to the history of Germans and Ladinos. He said that in a poll at school, most answered that in Guatemala, “Other than indians, there are Ladinos, but there are differences.” Referring to his *canche* classmates, Antonio says, tongue in cheek: “these aloof ‘Europeans’ were born right here, and are ladinos anyway. They are too proud to say they are Ladinos. One of them says that Ladinos are the offspring of a taxi driver and a whore. He says that ‘taxi drivers are Ladinos, and so are whores.’ And what do you think most of the people in the class are? Most are Ladinos!. Only two or three of these idiots who have their heads in the clouds answered that they were of German extraction, European extraction!. The worst of it is that these were people from the neighborhoods of Cobán, were they used to marry Indian women so that their land would not be taken away from them. The uncle of one of them who says he is form German ancestry laid with one of the Indian women at the plantation, and the *patoja* was red-haired, just like the *cerote*.”

To reply to the insult of his classmate who says Ladinos are the offspring of taxi drivers and whores, Antonio mocks those that are “too proud to say they are Ladinos” by

saying that they could be the product of a forced sexual relation with an Indian woman, as in the case of the “*patoja*, who looked just like the *cerote*.” In dialectal Guatemalan Spanish this racist posture could be read as follows: “I may be Ladino, but you, even though you think you are European and German, are Ladino anyway, and worse, your mother could well be an Indian like the daughter your uncle had who looks just like you.” This way of responding to an anti-Ladino aggression on the part of someone who thinks of himself as “white” turns out to be that the fact of being *canche* or red-haired, in spite of the visual impact of the phenotype, does not make the person white in the colonialist, anti-indigenous sense, and neither does it take away their Ladino condition, nor the possibility that they might be the offspring of an indigenous woman raped by a white man. Thus the counter attack, by taking away the prestige associated to white European blood and replacing it with the humiliating possibility of an illegitimate, indigenous origin, is just as classist and racist as the original attack<sup>221</sup>.

These contradictions are part of the shame of being or thinking of oneself as Ladino, and although the anti-Ladino sentiment exacerbates them, the myths of whiteness prevail in the end, especially among those who, for reasons of class or social ambition, are actively anti-indigenous and promoters of the anti-mestizo attitude of whites and of the whiteness of the Ladinos who consider themselves so. White people’s repudiation of Ladinos and the latter’s repudiation of whites who remind them of their non-white condition has the most atypical expressions in Guatemala. However, in one case or the other eventually there exists an awareness of being or wanting to be part of the international elite, the planet’s

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<sup>221</sup> Desde una perspectiva distinta a este “respeto al canche”, Leticia que es cakchiquel y está terminando su carrera magisterial en un instituto de educación pública de la ciudad capital, presenta una visión de la extranjería que alcanza no solo a los Ladinos sino a los “guatemaltecos de origen alemán”. Dice Leticia que “un Ladino es una persona que no es guatemalteca porque es parte de españoles y los guatemaltecos de origen alemán no cuentan porque si son guatemaltecos no son alemanes”.

minority which, beyond phenotype, shares the values of supremacy and the right to subjugate those who are not white and materially successful<sup>222</sup>.

### **Caquero Visions**

The white Guatemalan elite, in spite of being a white-*mestizo* dot in an ocean of *shumo* and indigenous people, has undoubtedly been very successful at mobilizing the anti-*cholero*, anti-*muco* and anti-*shumo* sentiment, inculcating in the Ladino middle and working classes its repulsion for *mestizaje indigena* and its celebration of *mestizaje eugenésico*. Both possibilities of repudiating and celebrating *mestizaje* have been historically rooted in the middle classes which lack the economic power of the elite, but who nevertheless feel the obligation to defend the structure of servile relations, which for

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<sup>222</sup> At different times in modern Guatemalan history, the inferiorization of Ladinos has been expressed at different levels, for example, in the writings of César Brañas and Rafael Arévalo Martínez about the degeneration of Ladinos, the barbaric nature of racial mixing that is present according to Manuel Arce Valladares in characters such as Manuel Estrada Cabrera; the opinions about the skin color of President José María Orellana; the ambiguous way in which, during the 1950 elections, the propaganda issued by General Idígoras in the name of nationalism denounced Coronel Jacobo Arbenz as a German, or the stigmatization of Ladinos against “pure indians”, as appears in the testimonies gathered by Marta Casás Arzú or in the volume about German immigration by Regina Wagner. Una interesante muestra de las concepciones sobre el carácter de las relaciones entre blancos, alemanes, *indios aladinados* y Ladinos en Guatemala, se encuentra en el libro de Regina Wagner que en su capítulo sobre “Aspectos socio-culturales de los alemanes” dice: “Los alemanes habían palpado muy pronto que la idiosincrasia o espíritu nacional del guatemalteco o ladino, con su amabilidad y cortesía de palabra, pero no de hecho, el ofrecer las mejores promesas y atenciones como el “poner a la orden”, el “tal vez” y el “mañana”, que olvidaban al nomás darles la espalda, eran motivo para que entre los mismos guatemaltecos nadie confiara en nadie. En general, sus virtudes y moralidad eran cualidades poco dignas de esfuerzo. Además mostraban en su quehacer poca energía, falta de escrúpulos, holgazanería y egoísmo”. En el extremo opuesto de este retrato de los guatemaltecos o ladinos, “las cualidades y virtudes del alemán se caracterizan como sigue: Cumplimiento, formalidad, puntualidad, disciplina, sentido del orden, constancia y tenacidad, y no convertir el lunes en día de feriado”. Wagner escribe: “En los decires de ambos pueblos se encuentra reflejada claramente su forma de ser y de pensar. El alemán dice que “sin trabajo no hay atajo” y “un hombre, una palabra”; en tanto que el iberoamericano piensa que “solo el tonto vive de su trabajo y el listo del de los demás” (Wagner 1999:306) A propósito del repudio a los *indios aladinados* o Ladinos aindiados, Wagner cita la voz ficticia de un indígena en *El Relato de Juan Tuyuc*, escrito por Valentín Solórzano Fernández (1991), que dice: “Los alemanes que son tan buenos patrones, pesan el café en una romana, pero los del país y sobre todo los ladinos aindiados son tramposos y ladrones con nosotros”, pp. 36-39. Otra expresión del repudio de los *indios aladinados*, es el discurso de ingreso a la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala del finquero Oscar Raphael: “Desde mi mas tierna infancia –tenía tres meses cuando fui llevado a la finca- he conocido y vivido cerca del indio del altiplano guatemalteco. Durante todos estos años, he podido valorizar y apreciar a nuestro indígena como un hombre bueno en el sentido lato de la palabra, hábil y útil elemento de nuestra economía, digno e merecer el grado de ciudadano cuando el buen criterio de nuestros legisladores le permita aspirar a ese derecho; cuando logre integrarse al progreso, la civilización y a la cultura por esfuerzo propio y disciplina adecuadas. Estoy hablando claro está, del indio promedio, sencillo e ingenuo, no del indio aladinado que abunda en nuestro pueblo con visible detrimento de nuestra agricultura” (Raphael 1951:227)

so many decades has obstructed social development in Guatemala. In contrast with Mexico, Ecuador, Peru or Bolivia, the repudiation of the working class or indigenous mestizo in Guatemala is more radical and hegemonic. This difference is partly due to the power of representation of the values of whiteness and anti-communism, which have been strategic for the reproduction of authoritarianism and regressive modernization in Guatemala.

In the new post-war stage, the inferiorization of dark-skinned plebeians has become more explicit in everyday life and in the media; the narratives have acquired a wider dissemination through newspapers columns, theater plays, Internet pages and radio programs which ridicule social climbing and “new money” and denigrate those who attempt to leave the slot assigned to them by the national and global social-racial hierarchy. The character created by comedian Monica Recinos to portray the prejudices of the elite against *mucos*, *shumos*, and the new rich, for example, summarizes in her name the social climbing aspirations of the capital city middle classes: “La Jacky” is short for “Ya Quisieras” (You Wish). La Jacky, Recinos’ character, said in an interview with journalist Juan Luis Font that she does not feel threatened by the new rich showing off their money, but that she feels “offended.” “It’s *disgusting*<sup>223</sup> to see mucos disguised as decent people. To see people who should be body guards walking around with body guards. People should know their place in society. A muco’s energy and my energy just don’t mix, no matter how much money they have. You know, people think I care only about money, but that is not so, it’s a thing of having refinement, elegance<sup>224</sup>.” La Jacky’s discourse illustrates the way in

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<sup>223</sup>In English in the original.

<sup>224</sup>“Was it painful to see people like you out of government?” asks Font to La Jacky.

“Who do you mean?”

“I mean people of high breeding, of good stock, like you,” the journalist replies.

“Ah, you are talking about the Canche [ex-president Arzú].”

“Yes, that’s who I’m talking about,” confirms Font.

“I used to ask him, ‘Canche, how can you govern a country so full of *choleros*?’ and he’d reply: ‘Because I love my country.’ He really dedicated his whole self to it, he was a martyr.”

which the culture of money, access to the symbolic power of the English language and the old and new prejudices about good and bad taste associated to “higher” and “lower” culture attempt to stop the weakening of the hegemonic barriers that for so many decades marked the limits between *decent* and *ordinary* people in Guatemala.

The article “La Shumada” by Alfred Kalschmitt has a more direct conceptual value for the analysis of socio-racism in Guatemala than Font’s interview of La Jacky. *Shumos*, according to Kalschmitt, are dirty, abusive, impertinent, thieving, vulgar, lazy and rude.” Shumoness, he continues, has nothing to do with racial differences, but with “bad taste” and with “an incorrigible rebelliousness at the rule of law. “*Shumos* are the antithesis of good taste.” The idea of taste as a social-class marker and the problem of having or lacking taste are part of the body of ideas and stereotypes which are meant to stigmatize, in this case, *shumos*. Kalschmitt insists that “*shumos* are those who fill the airplane with the smell of fried chicken and stuff the luggage compartments with tight shapeless bundles.” With no preamble or mediation, he asserts that “rap is *shumo*”, “marimba, if not played correctly, can become *shumo* too. The song about the “moño colorado” is *shumo*. Extravagant fashions and body piercing are totally *shumo*. As in other examples which we will look at later, the cult to authoritarian normalization represented by the columnist who certifies what is right or wrong for Guatemala is extremely intolerant, and is projected inside and outside national boundaries, as in the criticism to “extravagant fashion and body piercing”, in the attitudes towards Pinochet’s antagonists and to the international progressive struggles, which are also considered *shumas*.

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“Lately we’ve heard a lot of complaints about the (Colegio) American being full of ordinary people,” the journalist comments.

“Yes, that’s what happens when just anyone has money. The *new rich* are those who think they can buy anything with money. And really *my place* can’t be bought. That is, what nature didn’t give you, the Instituto Central para Varones won’t supply.”

The article of Kalschmitt contains many of the ideological elements around which the elite unites and mobilize the middle and even the working-classes who feel non-indigenous. He warns that “*shumos* are invading us”, “they are choking us with their dirt and vulgarity” (Who does “us” refer to? Is it us, the “decent people”?) And then he quickly adds that shumoness does not originate in poverty, because there are poor people who are decent and respectful.” Shumoness, he says “has nothing to do with racism, because there are white, yellow and black *shumos*.” The problem is that “the *shumo* demands a lot from society, but doesn’t give anything back. What *shumos* show off with arrogance is their anti-system attitude.” This remark about *shumos* and their anti-establishment attitudes coincides perfectly with the portrait of the *shumo* as a stubborn person who “is always being contrary,” who “is a rebel just because;” an attitude reminiscent of the racist colonial stereotype of the “stubborn, disobedient indian,” who appears also in the perceptions of some of the young people interviewed for this investigation. *Shumos* also “don’t hesitate to take what doesn’t belong to them, because they have no respect for other people’s property, just their own.” For Kalschmitt, “left wing people are responsible for kindling the fire of the *shumos*. For years it has been bringing them cheap dialectics and perverse theories to justify its attitude and their rebelliousness. The reason for that is that left wing politics is full of *shumos*. *Shumos* who agitate in favor of social rebellion with absurd justifications, as if you could have rights with no responsibilities and a place and post without work and dedication”.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Kalschmitt takes the *shumos* to other levels in the national structure. “politics is not free of *shumos*. They are as visible as the others. They think that if they have some dough and political aspirations, that is enough to make a candidacy—whether as mayors, representatives or president. For the *shumo* politician, business and politics are one and the same. Their government plans and proposals are a collection of infantile, naive notions.” For Kalschmitt, candidates are those who have the dough, but in the case of *shumo* candidates, even if they have the means, they are “infantile and naive.” Borrowing from old anticommunist representations of previous decades, and in reference to labor conflicts at a banana plantation, Kalschmitt asserts that being pro-union is the same as being *shumo*, and that neither “the nation-selling *shumos* nor the foreign left-wing *shumos* are excepted from this definition.” “Their last number included leaving hundreds of

From an opposite perspective, Carolina Escobar Sarti, until now the only columnist who openly criticizes the anti-*shumo* sentiment in Guatemala, says that “In a system that prizes material things over humanity, it is common to see the people of the high classes calling those they consider middle-class social climbers *shumos*, while they in turn look at the working-class masses with deep disgust, and it is not difficult to imagine that the working classes who consider themselves *ladinos* look at indigenous people from the perspective of their supposed superiority. In such a nation of castes, the fact that *shumos* appropriate spaces that had previously been reserved for the so-called nice people is repudiated, and *shumos* are excluded from national life.”<sup>226</sup> “*Shumos* exist to confirm that discrimination is a fact; to solve some people’s identity problem and to validate a system that establishes a convenient order.” *Shumos*, the writer says, “exist so that their superiors can talk their heads off about how much they appreciate them, and then hit them over the head when they try to raise their heads, to keep them bowing.” We live in a nation of submissive people, a nation of bowed heads, such as those of the obedient servants who know their place in society —and in the master’s house”.

### Measuring Who is Who in Guatemalan Society

A series of anonymous documents that circulate in the Internet show how Guatemalan elite and upper middle classes repudiate those *shumos* who aspire to be middle

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families with no work. It was them and not the plantation owner who fired them for invading the plantation. The judges and politicians involved who did not impose by force the empire of the law are *shumos* too.” The international *shumo* or the *shumo* State which abstains from imposing “the empire of the law” are important to the racialization of national politics and have important derivations which favor the repudiation of, for example, the United Nations mission in Guatemala which is perceived by many conservative columnists as an agent of social dissociation whose objective is to promote racial hatred among Guatemalans and to protect criminals in the name of human rights.

<sup>226</sup> Explaining how this hierarchy of discrimination, rooted in colonial social relations, operates, Escobar Sarti says that “there are many reasons why many of the people who have had cultural and economic power for long periods of time feel a sort of natural rejection for those they consider *shumos*.” In this columnist’s allusion to the “cultural and economic power” that is behind the “natural rejection” of *shumos* we detect a trace of what could be considered “cultural racism” that reinforces the class prejudice or “class racism” which separates the white or those who think of themselves as white from the rest of the population.



class. The “*Shumometro*”, the “*Cholerimetro*”, “*Algunas señas de que sos un LOSER*”, “*Mida SQ*,” and the *Anti-red songs* and jokes, openly express class, culture, gender and race prejudices in the context of a symbolic war. Thus, in a way that is both public and clandestine, meanings are being produced and disseminated with the purpose of punishing certain behaviors and of creating strong postures inside the public opinion. These documents, which link what is considered *shumo*, *cholero*, *muco* or loser, reinforce the thesis that racist sentiment in Guatemala is still fundamentally anti-indigenous and anti working-class *mestizo*. These are documents created and propagated by young people that set parameters of cultural consumption as class consumption with the purpose of stigmatizing other young people and tracing class, cultural and socio-racial borders .

### **The *Shumómetro***<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> *Shumometer*, version 1.0:

Have a little fun

Shumo: from Latin ‘*Shumus vulgaris*’, from Greek ‘*Shumos*’ although the origin of the word is uncertain, it is generally considered that the term came into use to describe the emergence of a primitive group of hominids who refused to evolve either culturally or socially, and preferred instead to keep their little backward cavemen customs alive. They can hardly be considered Homo anything, certainly not sapiens. They are also known as “muco”, “chinto” and (in spite of what some experts in sociology think) as “Cho-le-ro”!!!! (do not confuse with the term used by some to refer to domestic employees.). The SHUMO is a social (or anti-social), cultural (even though they have no culture by their own choice) existential condition rather than a racial feature. He has a characteristic way of walking, tricky ways, and form of expression (see below) SHUMOS are lazy, whining, treacherous, cheap drunks, idiosyncratic, macho, cowardly, ignorant, and generally, but not always, criminal. You are a shumo, cholero, muco or equivalent if you:

- 1) Say “Bien” instead of “Sí” ... (things should be called what they are)
- 2) Say “Ay te venís LUEGO” o “LIGERO” instead of “rápido”.
- 3) Say “Fijate de que” instead of ... “fijate que...”
- 4) Use black shoes with white socks (definitive feature) (as if dark socks were more expensive...)
- 5) Spit on the street to clear your throat (ahhh, pigs!)
- 6) Whistle to women on the street (and pretend to look elsewhere when they turn to look at you).
- 7) Use a white T-shirt with national, Los Angeles or Chicago sports teams logo under a white button-down shirt.
- 8) Write the amount you are owed on a bill [of money].
- 9) To blow your nose you use your hand to wring it and then flick the snot to the ground.
- 10) You put “Racing Team”, “Kenzo”, “Turbo” or other stickers in your car, which can hardly be called a car at all. (any sticker will do).
- 11) Throw out the window (on the street) the plastic bag of mango with pepitoria (or any other garbage).
- 12) Say “mas sin embargo”. (or “pero mas sin embargo”)

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- 13) Say "aquí tenemos lo que es..." or "...lo que viene siendo..."
  - 14) Polarizes the car windows so they are literally body-guard black.
  - 15) Take the other person's forearm when shaking hands
  - 16) Paint the exterior of your house sky blue or national blue.
  - 17) If you are a woman, you grow hair on your legs and underarms, if you are a man, you try to grow a mustache or a beard that doesn't grow.
  - 18) To call someone's attention you use sounds such as "Chst Chst Chst Chst!", "Shshst!" or "ah ks-ks-ks!"
  - 19) Your favorite basketball or baseball team is from L.A. or Chicago.
  - 20) Obvious: you put fluorescent purple lights in your car, or flashing lights around the plates.
  - 21) Think that "Parejas Diskoteke" or "Señor Tortuga" are hot spots...
  - 22) Say "¡Gusto EN verte;" instead of "gusto DE verte..."
  - 23) Block intersections with your car (14 street and Ave. La Reforma, for example. Those who understood this know what we are talking about) ---Incorrigible Cavemen.
  - 24) Say "Buen día" or "Buena tarde" or "Buena noche" (it's "buenas tardes" !!!!!)
  - 25) Install a car alarm to use it as a speaker at traffic lights (twit-twit-tu-ru-twit-twit)
  - 26) Use expressions like  
 "Que onda essee..."  
 "Derecho..."  
 "Estoy engasado ..."  
 "Sin casaca ..."
  - 27) Eat Pollo Campero in planes. Ahhhhh .... the shumo ....
  - 28) Listen to Norteñas (but at full volume .....SOOOOOOOOOO CHOLERO)
  - 29) Have your cell phone at top volume, and when it rings you don't speak, but SHOUT HELLOOOOOOOO!!!!
  - 30) Go around with your music with the volume (and the treble) at full "mosh", so it sounds tsst, tsst, tsst ... from when it comes in the distance to when it fades out (if Doppler had heard this he would never have demonstrated his famous "effect")
  - 31) Go religiously to the Mateo Flores or La Pedrera stadiums at least once a month (especially Saturday afternoons), because it's a "chilero" place.
  - 32) Your name is Gerson, Guilian (William), Jonatan, Yorch, (correct is George), Cristofer, Yulissa, Yesenia, Yadira, etc--- You should definitely have had it changed... (although this already appeared in the version called "Cholerímetro", so criticized in the circulars in 2000 ...We don't care)
  - 33) Call your girlfiend and/or 'connection' "wisa"
  - 34) If, on the Saturdays you don't go to the stadium, you enjoy them as never before watching Sábado Gigante.
  - 35) If your big "connections" in the government are a third-class official in Finance or an analyst of the Banguat.
  - 36) If you don't take off your cap all day, no matter what (or if you wear it backwards).
  - 37) If you wear a tie to an important reception, but with a chumpa.
  - 38) Voted for the FRG (wordless)
  - 39) Voted for the FRG ... (and now answer back). (There's no doubt ... you are a shumo and you asked for it)
  - 40) You are still blaming the PAN for Guatemala's filthy situation.
  - 41) If you're a woman, your nail polish looks flaky (how much time and/or money does it really take to take good care of your nails, to avoid those "ceviche-maker nails"?)
  - 42) Attack the process of the free negotiation of currencies in Guatemala (adducing that "we're losing `our` identity, our Quetzal, our flag, our white nun, ou...") ---Ig-No-Ra-Mu-Ses!!!!!!!!
  - 43) If given the right of way in a traffic bottleneck, you are not able to give a simple Thank you (of pure politeness)
  - 44) WRITE YOUR E-MAIL MESSAGES A-L-L IN CA-PI-TA-LSSSSSSSSS! --CHOLERO!
  - 45) Think you're a black "rapper" (with all the gestures of a delinquent rapper).
  - 46) Put on a football shirt to go out with the family... (aaahhhh, so shumo!)

The preceding is NOT about "good" kids or "upper class Daddy's boys". It's a reality. If the "experts" in chapina [Guatemalan] sociology are offended, it's because of one of these shoes fits. Here there are no scales or scores or any of that ( like in the cholerímetro). If you suffer at least ONE of the above characteristics or symptoms, you are a SHUMO. Period.

The anonymous authors of the *Shumometer* quote the origin of the term *shumo* as from the Latin “*shumo vulgaris*”. The importance of classic Greek and Latin in the definition of *shumo* vulgarity reiterates the authority granted to “classic literature,” to anthropological knowledge considered scientific, and to the western tradition which is the source of modern civilizing superiority. In the same mockingly scientific tone, the authors go on to assert that “although the origin of the word is uncertain, it is generally considered that the term came into use to describe the emergence of a primitive group of hominids who refused to evolve either culturally or socially, and preferred instead to keep their little backward cavemen customs alive.” The classic positivist dichotomy primitive-civilized is used here to construct a regressive and pre-human temporality, in which *shumos* are unevolved cavemen who can hardly be categorized “as *Homo sapiens*.” This taxonomy of *shumos* as hominids found in the earliest stage of human development reinforces the supremacy of technological know-how, which is assumed are the source of the *Shumometer* and which grant it scientific and civilizing soundness.

The markers established to measure the shumoness are varied: phenotype,

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If you find any of these characteristics in someone, tell them without fear that he or she is a SHUMO. The shumo is the reason why we are how we are ...It has nothing to do with the dollar, the government (which is full of Shumos by the way) nor with the church, nor the gringos, nor ANY of that. It's the Shumos. Period.

This version is found in several compilations by DECENT people. Its author(s) is(are) not, in any way, linked with the author of the manuscript titled “Cholerímetro” (April, 2000).

Look out for the second version of this compendium. Very soon in your inbox.  
IMPORTANT NOTE: He/she who feels offended by the contents of this document, can dance a little sample of break-dance for us ...

Attentively,  
The Shumómetro Team... “For a Guatemala free from Shumos”.

traditions, names, dress<sup>228</sup>, speech, social interaction, etiquette, food, housing, ways in which body excretions are managed<sup>229</sup>, music, sports and television preferences<sup>230</sup>, choice of places of entertainment, everything related to cars, real or imagined links with the sources of economic and political power, the way of using cell phones and e-mail. In social and ideological contrast with the white patriarchal macho, who is masculine, corporate, rich, hard-working, liberal or conservative, who protects, provides, guards and defends, and in this way earns the right to subjugate others (starting with the woman who admires and is grateful to him), *shumos* are “lazy, whiney, treacherous, cheap drunks, idiosyncratic, macho, cowardly, ignorant, and generally, but not always, criminal.” This definition of *shumo* is reminiscent of the stereotypes about the lazy indian, the “*indio aladinado*”, and the “*chancle aguacatero*,” “*quejita*” (whiney), untrustworthy, not a “*bolo fino*” which appear in the examples gathered by Lisandro Sandoval in his *Guatemalan Semantic* (1941) and by

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<sup>228</sup> Regarding dress style, for example, a person is a *shumo* if he or she wears black shoes and white socks, T-shirts with national, Los Angeles or Chicago sports teams logos under a white button-down shirt; uses a tie with a *chumpa*, uses a baseball hat all day, or wears it backwards. These, among other characteristics, are instances where the right to certify what it is socially appropriate to wear according to the norms imposed by the dominant class and culture are manifest. As with names and surnames, here it is the attempt to imitate the dress style of white North Americans without having the appropriate social status or phenotype.

<sup>229</sup> Alarm at seeing someone spit on the street to “clear the throat”, or blow their nose using the hand and “wringing the nose” then flinging the snot to the ground is part of the rejection of the grotesque elements of hygienic habits of most of the national population who is considered barbarian and unforgivable. The repudiation of the popular grotesque illustrates the preeminence of the classic body in bourgeois morality and its punishment of the individual who is still attached to the ancient body and is part of a primitive mass who regularly mixes its excreta with the elements which compose the cosmic order. (Stallybras 2001). Other aspects where the zeal to impose the classic and disciplined body of the bourgeois, its orifices and its panic of physical contact over the forms of communication that are considered vile and pre-modern of the primitive body is the stigmatization of the *shumo* habit of taking “the forearm of a person when shaking hands”, or calling someone’s attention with sounds such as “Chst Chst Chst Chst!”, “Shshsht!” or “ah ks-ks-ks!”. Still in this corporal dimension, the fact that a woman doesn’t shave her legs or armpits or that a man grows a mustache or a beard even when it doesn’t grow very well is also enough to place someone in the denigratory classification. Also repudiated are “cook’s nails” a feature that brings to mind the wide spectrum of *cocineras*, *verduleras*, *tortilleras*, *atoleras*, *tamaleras*, *cholojeras*, *regatonas del mercado*, *vendedoras de canasto* and all other women who due to their condition as women who work in the urban food preparation sector, constitute the feminine form of the *cholero* nation, the lowly people that the elite despise. The intolerance of the radical anti-*shumo* conservative movement criticizes the habit of writing names, orders or messages on paper money, a pre-modern detail which is reminiscent of the rejection by some Guatemalans of new denomination money, instances of which were reported as late as the early twentieth century when in the neighborhood of Jocotenango in Guatemala City pieces of porcelain, or of other coins were used as money, or the belief that postage stamps can be reused.

<sup>230</sup> Regarding entertainment, the classist ridicule of the naive world of the poor stigmatizes the loyal viewers of the program *Sábado Gigante*, a Miami TV show hosted by the Chilean character known as Don Francisco and transmitted to several Latin American cities. This *shumo*-ization of the people who view such programs—often because they don’t have access to cable TV and can only watch the few local channels—is a radical expression of the cultural, racial and classist anti-democracy that is more prevalent in Guatemala than in other nations of the continent.

Federico Hernández de León (1943) in the work written during the Ubico dictatorship and the years immediately following.

The linguistic transnationality of hispanicized English names, a result of migration and of the cultural influence of the United States, is looked down upon. The penalization that accompanies the use of popular English names is part of the effort to maintain old representations of what is considered socially appropriate according to a person's social and cultural origin. Thus, for example, according to the canons of racial and class supremacy derived from foreign immigration and the export agriculture, it's correct to have a name such as Wilmer if the last name is something like Plotcharsky, but if the last name is Chonay, for instance, the use of such a first name is ridiculed, because such daring violates the unwritten rules which establish which are the names that Indians and *shumos* are supposed to use according to the social and cultural capital associated to their last names. They don't have the right to use those names, and much less to reinvent them, to modify their spelling or adapt them to their own dynamics of symbolic representation. They should use names like Juana, José, Pedro, Sebastián, Micaela, Encarnación, Marcial, Teódula or Caciana. However, a person is a *shumo* if his or her name is such as "Gerson, Guilian (William), Jonatan, Yorch, (George), Cristofer, Yulissa, Yesenia, Yadira, etc."

The *shumo*, as a transnational subject, a member of a migrating community which lacks "education" and "high culture", risks being stigmatized inside Guatemala as a *cholo latino* or Mexican *naco*. In this sense the trans-nationalization of the sentiment which denigrates working class *mestizo* culture is part of a Pan-American consciousness of whiteness which is manifest in the polarization of repertoires in which racial and class prejudices mix together. Los Angeles is considered the "Mecca of *shumos*," and a person is a *shumo* if he dresses as a *cholo*, if he adopts "Mexican" musical tastes or, more explicitly,

if “he listens to *norteño* music (at a very loud volume)” or “pretends to be a black rapper.” Here again *shumo*-ization crosses the national borders and makes being a rapper, black, or non-white into being a criminal. The representation of the rapper as black, the black as rapper and the black as criminal also corresponds to the essentialist denigration of all musical expressions that belong in the cultural universe of those considered inferior people. The Guatemalan working class, indigenous, and Ladino diaspora is modifying symbolical hierarchies. Thus, it is now considered *shumo* to use American sports team T-shirts, something that in decades past was usual among the wealthier Guatemalans who speak English, travels to the US sometimes just to attend a sports match and follow the matches on cable TV<sup>231</sup>.

Some of the most virulent expressions of anti-*shumo* sentiment arise around one of the most powerful symbols of technological modernity: the automobile. *Shumo*-ness can thus be assigned according to the brand and color of the car a person is driving, from the music played in it, the size of the speakers, and the decoration. The car is the central axis of everyday life for the “daddy’s boy”, the *junior*, *fresa*, *caquero*, or *normal*, and it serves to make a show of power for which the driver is respected, envied, or in the case of the *shumo*, denigrated or treated as *indio igualado*. The fact that “now there are tons of Indians with cars” and that “any Indian can drive a BMW”, as Jaime Fernández from Francisco Marroquín University says, has modified the symbolical power of cars, re-positioning the previous boundary between those who are Indians or *shumos* and should therefore walk or

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<sup>231</sup> It is considered *shumo* to paint one’s house sky blue or national blue, and a simple detail which would go unnoticed in Mexico or the U.S., such as wearing a football shirt to go out with the family in Guatemala gets a harsh and direct stigmatization (“aaahhhh, qué *shumo*!”). *Shumo* also are those who “attend at least once a month the Mateo Flores or La Pedrera stadiums “because it is a “*cholero*” place. It is difficult to imagine someone in Mexico City or any city in the U.S. being considered socially inferior because they go to a football match at a stadium. The representation of football as a *shumo* sport, however, does not prevent anti-*cholero* and anti-*shumo* sentiment being projected on the rivaling local teams, the “Cremas” del Comunicaciones, who consider that the “Rojos” del Municipal are *choleros*. We will return to this issue later on.

ride in public transport and those who, due to their whiteness and economic power, feel they have the right to drive a vehicle that the rest of the population can't afford. Indigenous or Ladino immigrants who return from the U.S. with second-hand cars and then sell them in the provinces are contributing to the democratization of the prestige associated with being a car owner, no matter how wrecked the car is.

Since the Guatemalan elite can't limit the access to the great totem of capitalist modernity, it denigrates as *shumo* those cars decorated with stickers in English and flashing or fluorescent lights, fitted with polarized "bodyguard" windows, alarms that are used at every stoplight and large speakers for loud music, among other elements of ornamentation, over-ornamentation and the ways to normalize it which are the targets of criticism. Under this socio-racist perspective, the prestige of machines and the cult of automotive technology as a space of representation and resistance would consider *shumo* many of the low-riders and other cars decorated by their Californian, Texan, *chicano*, *pocho*, black, and white-trash owners, who "custom fit" their cars to make them more flashy.

Echoing the "why we are where we are" invoked in other contexts by an elite which is preoccupied with the existence of an essentialist Guatemalan who is usually the sum of many supremacist and denigrating identities, the *Shumometer* concludes: "*Shumos* are the reason why we find ourselves where we are... This has nothing to do with the dollar, the government (which is full of *shumos*, by the way), the Church or the Americans, or anything like that. It's because of the *shumos*. Period." The categorical conclusion that "we are where we are" because of the masses of undesirable, expendable and exterminatable *shumos* is later complemented with the explicit remark that it is "DECENT people" who are in charge of gathering the information to create the *Shumometer*. At the end of the document, as if part of a political agenda that mocks the war of liberation of the past

(which, in the tone of these labels would have been an anti-*caquero* war), the *Shumometer* Team calls for a Guatemala free of *shumos* and in an IMPORTANT NOTE reiterates the right to ridicule, and invites those who feel offended by the document to dance a “little break-dance number.” Here again is an instance of repudiation of transnational popular, street culture, considered by the conservative global revolution as another success of the hegemonic contention strategy which inculcates the shame of being poor and the importance of consuming as the space par excellence to live the experience of bourgeois freedom in the modern world, although in the case of Guatemala it’s important to remember that racial and class prejudices still hinder the practice of the liberal code which proclaims the market as the vehicle for pro-capitalist individual development and social participation<sup>232</sup>.

### ***“Algunas Señas de que sos un LOSER”***

Another anonymous document circulating in the internet which serves to illustrate the way in which class and race foster the reproduction of anti-indigenous and anti-working class *mestizo* sentiments in Guatemala is “*Algunas Señas de que sos un LOSER*”<sup>233</sup>. This document repeats several of the themes treated in the *Shumómetro*<sup>234</sup>, but with the criterion that being a “loser” (English in the original) has as its fundamental premise being a *shumo*.

The punishment for poor people’s social climbing aspirations and their imitation of the

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<sup>232</sup> Other instances of the war that combines race and class discrimination and playfulness can be found at [cerotes.com](http://cerotes.com) and [shumos.com](http://shumos.com). This is presented as a parody of a “*cholero* page” and lists in first person the various attributes of the *shumo*: “my car, my dress style, my appearance, my accent, my name.” It is significant that the car is at the top of the list, followed by the dress style, which we discussed in the interviews, the appearance or phenotype, the accent, which would mark some one not from Guatemala City, and the name, which alludes to those who have a popular *ladino*, *mestizo* or Mayan surname and a first name of Anglo-Saxon origin, often hispanicized or “misspelled.” In all this the inferiorization of rural, non-urban poor people or of the dark-skinned plebeian is present.

<sup>233</sup> Some signs you are a LOSER

<sup>234</sup> As with the *Shumometer*, sports preferences might mark a person as a loser if for example, “your favorite basketball team is the Lakers or a Chicago team ...because you have a friend who went over “there” to work! If you watch football you only know the Sacachispas or the Cremas! Or you use a shirt and pants of the Real Madrid, Cremas or Brasil which you bought at a chinese store or on the Sixth.”



consumption habits of the elite is clearer and more direct here. As in the *Shumometer*, this document establishes with precision the limits of upward social mobility and the markers of social success and failure. The right of membership to the club of those who, as opposed to “the losers” are “the successful” is zealously guarded, and one of the more evident signs of transgression is “using the word loser when you yourself are a loser!” This rating incorporates Mexican and American elements which help define converging representational fields such as the definition of the various kinds of LOSERS: *LOSER-LOSER*, *SOCIAL LOSER*, *LOSER WANNABE*, *INTERNATIONAL LOSER*, *INNOCENT LOSER*, *NACO LOSER*<sup>235</sup>, *SNOB LOSER*, *HIPER-SHUMO LOSER* and *POOR LOSER*, among others<sup>236</sup> This conceptualization of loser emphasizes the consciousness of consumer hierarchies and the limited entertainment options available to young people with no purchasing power, who have to make do with what the local radio and TV networks offer. Access to cable TV, computers, Internet, cell phones, phenotype, cars, and designer clothes become class markers, each with its particular nuances. In a context in which using English terms or demonstrating fluency is still a marker of social superiority, it is important to show where one learned—or thought one had learned—the language<sup>237</sup>.

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<sup>235</sup> Anti-Mexican sentiment combines with the Guatemalan version of anti-*naco* sentiment (for example, being a LOSER *NACO* because you speak like Adal Ramones, you watch the TV show *La Academia*, or you like Miriam or Yahir). The reappropriation of *naco* culture does not inhibit however an openly critical attitude towards a popular television culture very influenced by Mexican TV and which covers a good part of the program of local networks.

<sup>236</sup> Thus a LOSER LOSER or “SOCIAL LOSER” (“it’s in English!!!”) is the person who admires and has nothing better to do on a Saturday than watch the Mexican TV show *Otro Rollo*, hosted by Adal Ramones. LOSER NACO is the person who followed the full two series of the Mexican show *La Academia* and has among his or her favorites Miriam or Yahir. LOSER SNOB is the person who doesn’t know what SUV means —Sport Utility Vehicle—“and doesn’t have even one of them”. LOSER HIPER SHUMO is the person who has a “car with one or more No FEAR, NITTO, RACING TEAM stickers, or any other such sticker: .COM, BAD BOYS or a little boy urinating.” POOR LOSER is the person who has “more than 4 pirate CD’s bought at Sixth or at a traffic light” and finally, LOSER is the person who uses the word LOSER being themselves a LOSER.

<sup>237</sup> Thus for example a sign of being a loser is if you “sing songs in English and didn’t even pass course 1 of the IGA”, or you didn’t “go to the IGA, but the CIAV”. In this contradicting mixture of localism and transnationalism it is evident that there is now an important number of working-class Indigenous and *ladino* Guatemalans who have been exposed to English, but who are ridiculed and unauthorized to use the anglicisms which are part of the symbolic heritage of the social elite. (“Cool”, “cute”, “bumper stickers”, “fashion”, “shopping”, “social loser”, “loser wannabe”, “suv”, are a few examples of these linguistic practices that reflect important social differences.)

“Some signs you are a loser” is even more drastic than the *Shumometer*. It is revealing that at the end of the document, the corollary to the whole conceptual development about losers is the affirmation, in capital letters, that there are losers who are not *shumos*, and few *shumos* that are not losers. The culmination is repudiation of *shumos*, and the anti-loser sentiment finally serves to inject greater belligerence to the anti-*shumo* sentiment. This is a symbolic moment in which class prejudice, naturalized and normalized, openly becomes racial prejudice and congeals in the anti-indigenous sentiment that repeatedly emerges in the characterizations of *shumo*-ness and the denigration of working-class *mestizo* culture, considered of “bad taste”, lacking “class” and impure.

### ***Mida su SQ***

Evidence of the way in which these sentiments are renovated and strengthened can be found in the latest of these series of documents, titled “Mida su SQ” (May 2004). SQ stands for “Cociente *Shumencial*.” This is an updated version of the *Shumometer* and contains a few important additions, such as the terms *chama* and *guaje* as synonyms for *shumo* and the use of the Mexican word *pendejos* —even when on the very next line the document criticizes those who are “ridiculously mexicanized who use the term “*naco*” as a synonym for denigratory Guatemalan terms. It is revealing that this document classifies *shumos* according to the characteristics of their speech, dress, car, musical tastes, sports preferences and traditions, and that it has a section on recommendations about the measures that should be taken in case a person can still be saved, if he or she has only one or two *shumo* symptoms. Again, having to do with the central issue of the car and in the transnational dimension of active repudiation of working-class culture, a person is *shumo* if he or she “has at least 4 relatives living in the United States and travels there at least 3

times a year to bring one or two wrecked cars” *Shumos* also think that “having a Honda is a status symbol<sup>238</sup>,” or, in the current that links automobiles and decency, a *shumo* “has more cars than fit in the family’s garage, and therefore parks several of them on the street, even though putting them all together you don’t get one whole decent car.” The Measure your SQ document warns that “shumitis is a chronic and highly contagious disease, which has acquired epidemic proportions in Guatemala,” and that “should be treated as any medical condition”. When the person suffers from one or two of the listed symptoms, the therapy to eradicate *shumo*-ness consists of administrating: “8 daily extra-strength doses of CLASS”, which come in “three-inch (wide) suppositories which guarantee a better absorption.” In this case the medical treatment combines the class prejudice with some of the cliches of homophobia and teasing homosexuality which is part of the macho, racist and patriarchal behavior in Guatemala and other countries in the world.

Thus, the combination of penetration and anality as the way to prevent *shumitis* and lack of class demonstrates the feudal way in which the patriarchal, homosexual and macho youth of Guatemala inhabits, colonizes and possesses, in the most sexual connotation of the word, those considered losers, *shumos* or *choleros*, as well as most women and in general the poor, particularly if they are *mestizo* indians<sup>239</sup>. This obsession for sexual possession of the other, for a fundamental misogyny, teasing homophobia, macho homosexuality, anality and scatology, can be observed more clearly in spaces where anonymity allows the symbolic war to become more crude and bloodthirsty. Such is the case of the insults and jokes with which some of the followers of the soccer team of the “Cremas” *del Comunicaciones* attack their rivals, the “Rojos” *del Municipal*, stigmatizing them as

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<sup>238</sup> An additional annotation says that *choleros*’ favorite cars are “the Honda Civic, Nissan Sentra, Toyota Teruel, or the mostly wrecked CRX”.

<sup>239</sup> !!! Measure your “SQ” (Shumo Quotient) before it’s too late!!!

“servants”, “*choleros*”, homosexuals, bastards, and sons of whores. Particularly cruel samples of these ways of denigrating and accentuating social, ethnic, gender and class inequality can be found at the websites “Cantos Anti-Rojos” and “La página antiroja del web”<sup>240</sup>. Both show an ample repertoire of the vicious ways in which the feminine figure is attacked, whether as a mother, whore or raped woman. Violated women are still “more intelligent than their bastard *cholero* offspring,” whose existence is ridiculed in a series of brief jokes which portray him as sexually impotent, cuckolded, and a son of a bitch, rejected by all women except prostitutes<sup>241</sup>. In the Cremas’ anti-Rojos songs, Rojos are considered homosexuals, and treated as children, criminals, animals, or literally as shit and garbage. They are violently suppressed as people and as a sports rival<sup>242</sup>.

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<sup>240</sup> For example, the website “Cantos Anti-Rojos” (Anti-Rojos Songs) says in its presentation: “This site is dedicated to the worst team in the nation. The songs found here are dedicated to all the sorry *choleros* of Guatemala.” The “página anti-roja” (Anti-Rojo Page), for its part, announces in its welcome: “Here you will find the best jokes to laugh about thieves, sissies, rapists, kidnappers, transvestites, chickens, *choleros*, bank-robbers, murderers, mareros, bochincheros, mamones, etc.” “The jokes you will find”—they warn— “are only jokes: no offense is intended to any race, social or religious group, only uneducated Rojos.” The note in this case warning that no offense is intended to anyone except for “uneducated Rojos” turns out to be an important symbolic field which is developed in the documents previously analyzed. The warning that this there is no class or race content is followed by the recommendation never to call *cholero* a Rojo, “to avoid the redundancy.” Saying that *choleros* are *choleros* and that if Indians get mad is because they are too, one of the jokes asks in an allusion to the labor structure of the national economy: “When does a *cholero* go to school? —When he builds it.” And in a similar mocking way: “If a Rojo and a Crema throw themselves down from the top of a building, who falls first? —the Crema, because the *cholero* stops to clean the windows.” The jokes go from more or less naive and idiosyncratic metaphors about working-class eating habits, such as the Rojos being called “beans” because the “Crema (cream) always goes on top” to a wider repertoire which strikes not only at the “uneducated Rojos” but goes on to denigrate with very little sophistication the mother and wife of the *cholero* Rojo, and portrays him as a homosexual (“*cholero puto*”), the self representation of the Crema (the white team) as the father of the *cholero* who in turn is the bastard offspring of a whore and who is pictured in various subordinate positions such as servant, sexually impotent, cuckold, drunk, boy, imbecile, dirty and criminal. An example of the denigration of women of the Rojo faction are the following lines, sung to the tune of a popular song, which allude to the menstrual period: “Y los muchachos del barrio le llamaban ‘Roja’, y unos hombres vestidos de blanco (los Cremas) le dijeron ‘Ven’ y ella gritó ‘No señor, ya lo ve, yo no soy roja, estuve roja pero fue de menstruación’”.

<sup>241</sup> What is a Crema doing in a whorehouse? —looking for pleasure What is a Rojo doing in a whorehouse? —Looking for his mother. How is a pregnant whore similar to the Municipal team shirt? —They both have a son of a whore inside. What does a *cholero* do after making love? —He pays. (only whores will sleep with him, or his wife is a whore) Why is the Municipal called ugly whore? —because it will only stroke the tip. Why is it that when a Rojo rapes a woman she never reports the crime? —She doesn’t even notice. What does a *cholero* do to get his wife pregnant? —He orders pizza and goes to the soccer stadium. A woman comes in the police station yelling ‘I’ve been raped by a Rojo!’ the policeman says ‘Calm down, how do you know he was a Rojo?’ and the woman replies ‘I had to help him.’

<sup>242</sup> Following are some excerpts from the Cantos: “jamás, jamás/serán campeones, *choleros* maricones/porque el campeón es su papá” or “cantemos todos porque el Rojo ya es pasado y ha quedado demostrado que el Crema es su papá”. The infantilization of the Rojo *cholero* is manifest in rhymes such as “llora, llora, llora el Rojo/llora, llora, sin parar/porque sabe que este año/el campeón es su papá” o el “*cholero* llorón, tu padre es el campeón,” in which the self-portrayal of the Crema as father of the Rojo makes the latter not only a bastard in the purest conquest style, the son of a raped indigenous woman, but also an imbecile, intellectually limited person: as in “los Cremas no tienen padre/los Cremas no tienen

From a different perspective, it is important to mention that young non-indigenous Guatemalans are more aware of the negotiations, appropriations and contradictions of their intercultural practice with indigenous culture, particularly in topics like the annual festival in honor of Virgen de Guadalupe on December, 12<sup>243</sup>; their perceptions about “Mayas arqueológicos” and “Mayas contemporáneos”<sup>244</sup>; the ideological presence of Popol Vuh in

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rival/solo tienen un hijo mula/que se llama Municipal”. This violent paternity is reminiscent of the festivities of the emotional family religious calendar, as in the verse “Ya se acerca Nochebuena, ya se acerca Navidad/para todos los *choleros*/el regalo de papá”. “Rojo, hijo de puta, que vos no ganés yo tengo culpa.” The fact of having a child with a prostitute, the supreme consecration of violent macho patriarchy of the early conquest and colonization. The mother of the *cholero* is a puta and the Rojos are “la hinchada mas puta de las chapinas”. The bastardization of the sports and class enemy includes his criminalization (“dale alegría, alegría a mi corazón, morite Rojo hijo e puta, Rojo ladrón”). (“Rojo, Rojo *cholero*, sos la vergüenza del país entero/Los de la Ultra Roja son todos ladrones/siempre en mara, los maricones”). In this same criminalizing tendency, the anti-Rojo page asks What is the first thing that a Rojo says when he goes into a store? —Hands up!. Why does the Crema run? —to keep fit. Why does the Rojo run? —because the cops are after him. What is a *cholero* driving a BMW called? —Thief. Why do *choleros* start asking the time as soon as the soccer match starts? —Its the signal to start stealing watches. To the premise that all Rojos are thieves is added that they are homosexuals, putos or maricones. “Borombombón, borombón,/el que no salta es un Rojo maricón”. “conocí a un *cholero* que era un Rojo maricón,” “los *choleros* son todos putos”. In this same tendency, scatological elements are added: (“Ahí esta, ahí está es la banda de Pirulo, la que siempre está dando el culo/Rojo que asco que me das, lavate el culo con aguarrás”). (“Ortega, la Ultra te viene a saludar/igual que todos los Rojos vos sos homosexual”). Scatological repudiation is combined with allusions to servitude: “A barrer, a trepear el estadio nacional/los *choleros* del Municipal/La máquina escarlata, no es mas que pura caca”. “Con la bandera azul y colorada/me limpio el culo cuando me echo una cagada”. Rojos are considered garbage. The Anti-Rojo page asks: What is the difference between a Rojo and the garbage pail? —The pail. How long does it take a Rojo woman to put the garbage out? —Nine months. Why do they call the Municipal garbage? —Because it is garbage. Rojos are completely suppressed: “Ooooo Rojo, no existís/no existís”, treated as cowards “Rojo gallina”, and their extermination is celebrated. What is the difference between tragedy and catastrophe? —A tragedy is when a bus full of Rojos falls down a precipice. A catastrophe is when none of them die. In another story, a Crema is about to die and he tells his son that his last wish is to become a Rojo. The boy, surprised, says, ‘but Dad, you have been a Crema all your life, why would you want to do that?’ —‘So that a Rojo dies,’ he replies. The symbolic war also explores the animalization of the other, as in What happens if you breed a donkey and a turtle? —you get a *ninja cholero* or What is the difference between a *cholero* and a cow? —The light of intelligence in the cow’s eyes. The stupidity of *choleros* is emphasized: What do you get with 10 Rojos and 10 goats? —Half a brain.or What has an IQ of 8? —15 Rojos. Why do they call the Municipal a VW? —Because even an idiot can drive him. The most basic and obvious say: “Rojos *choleros*, los Cremas son primero” and “ay, ay, ay, ay ,ay, ay, lo digo yo/es el Rojo más estúpido que existió”. Somewhere else the macho role of alcohol and the high place it has in adolescent culture is combined with aggression towards the mother: “Cuando me pedía leche, yo le daba, yo le daba pero si pedía cerveza yo la madre le sacaba”. Or in the opposite stance: “los Rojos son tipos derechos ...van derecho al vino, al whisky, a la cerveza”.

<sup>243</sup> A Josefina no la vistieron de indígena siendo niña aunque “es tradición pero hay muchas personas que no saben ni por qué es eso. Es tradición. Ahora ya no.” Nancy dice que cuando la vestían de indígena el 12 de diciembre “lo molestaban a uno, ‘ah tu eres indita’..., yo no me acuerdo de eso porque estaba muy pequeña, pero si he visto fotos y cada vez que aparecen las fotos si lo molestan a uno”. ¿Y tu vestirías a tus hijos o a tus hijas así? “¿Por qué no?”. A Carmen tampoco la vistieron y solo una vez la vistieron con un traje regional “cuando salí en un acto nada más bailando el son”. En cambio, Alejandro dice que “para la Virgen de Guadalupe me vistieron de Juan Diego. No sé. Lo sentí como cuando uno se disfrazaba para Halloween o una cosa así. Como que eran eventos como cuando la gente se disfraza a veces de Santaclós para las Navidades. Como algo teatral. Sí, como algo teatral. Sí, así es.”

<sup>244</sup> Lo primero que se le viene a la mente a Carmen cuando se habla de los mayas son “las ruinas”. “A veces le empiezan a contar historias a uno de cómo vivieron los mayas, los sacrificios que hacían y todo eso, y uno se pone a pensar que hay ruinas. Si las ruinas, eso es lo primero que se me viene a la mente”. ¿Hay relación entre los mayas que construyeron las ruinas y los contemporáneos? “Ah si, como nosotros tenemos descendencia maya. Yo creo que de ahí viene la raza indígena. Si todos estamos conectados con los mayas y todo tiene que ver con Tikal y todos esos lugares”. A Josefina cuando se le habla de lo maya lo primero que se le viene a la mente es El Petén, “Petén, su cultura”. Nancy piensa en Tikal, las ruinas, “los dibujos que he visto de los mayas, eso es lo primero”. “Tikal es tan importante, dice Carmen, porque fue el lugar donde habitaron los mayas. Es un lugar que me han contado la verdad es algo muy, muy bonito, que

their intellectual history<sup>245</sup>; their positions in relation to learning indigenous language as part of the national curricula<sup>246</sup> or the use of the “*ropa típica*”<sup>247</sup>. With the “*ropa típica*”, for example, the ambiguity toward Mayan culture is similar to that observed in relation to the myth of *Tecun Uman*<sup>248</sup> or the admiration for the ancient Mayan city of Tikal<sup>249</sup>.

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es una experiencia bonita. Y desde allí todo se mira diferente y uno admira más lo que tiene”. Nancy no ha ido a Tikal tampoco pero si ha visitado el Museo de Arqueología que existe en la ciudad capital. “Habían cosas que eran totalmente desconocidas para mi y me sentí muy orgullosa de mi cultura, pero todavía falta mucho por conocerse, porque lo que tienen en el Museo de Arqueología es muy poquito en comparación a lo que realmente es la cultura maya”.

<sup>245</sup> En una sesión de preguntas ráfaga al respecto, las respuestas fueron del siguiente tenor ¿Leíste el Popol-Vuh? “Si he oído hablar de él, pero no...” (CM) ¿Y leíste el Popol-Vuh cuando estabas en el colegio “No, no me lo pusieron” (NF). ¿Pero si has oído hablar del Popol-Vuh? “Si tengo una pequeña idea, si pero no lo he leído, pero he leído otras cosas más...” (JV) ¿Cuándo estuviste en la escuela leíste el Popol-Vuh? “No, eso si no”. ¿Pero si has oído de ese libro? “Lo he escuchado si”. (EE)

<sup>246</sup> Si se sometiera a votación la enseñanza de lenguas mayas en los colegios públicos y privados de Guatemala, Josefina lo apoyaría, “porque eso es lo que tendríamos que aprender. Estamos aprendiendo el idioma castellano que vino después de la conquista. Nos obligaron a aprender este idioma y conforme fue pasando el tiempo ya lo adaptamos como nuestro. Pero creo que sería bueno aprender las lenguas mayas porque son nuestros idiomas y son algo de aquí de Guatemala”. “Yo pienso que es tonto que no apoyen una cosa así porque están negando su propia cultura, dice Nancy. Pienso que ellos están mal, que se avergüenzan de lo que realmente es Guatemala”. Eduardo: “Yo pienso que sirve, serviría, si llega a servir para que lleguemos a tener ese amor a la patria de que hablábamos, podría darse pero yo creo que debería darse la conveniencia realmente de ese tipo de cosas. Bueno... ¿para que voy a hablar el idioma quiché si simplemente me va a servir allá lejos por los Cuchumatanes? No creo que sea muy conveniente, pero si esto va a servir para que en Guatemala cuando se cante el Himno ya no se cante ‘Guatemala feliz...’ casi que viendo para abajo sino que se levante la frente y se diga ‘vamos a sacar adelante al país’. Aquí, las acechanzas del nacionalismo maya son filtradas por el civismo heredado de la reforma liberal. Le pregunto a Carmen cuál es el símbolo que más identifica a los guatemaltecos y sin mucho pensarlo responde con una lista breve de símbolos patrios: “El quetzal, la monja blanca y el himno, pero la verdad nosotros los guatemaltecos nos debemos sentir orgullosos del himno.” ¿Por qué razón? “A veces uno se pone a analizar la estrofa y son cosas que uno se pone a pensar que todo lo que ha pasado, todo, y con eso que está en segundo lugar a nivel mundial y de ser uno de los himnos más lindos, pues uno se tiene que sentir orgullosa de su himno.” ¿Como fue la experiencia de haber escuchado el himno en tu escuela? “La verdad es que muy bonito, yo tuve la oportunidad de ir a ver una historia del himno nacional y todo eso, incluso son cosas que son bonitas y más que todo yo quiero estudiar mucho para ser una patriota. Eso tiene que ver mucho, es muy importante de querer uno a su patria, su país, porque prácticamente es donde uno ha vivido”

<sup>247</sup> A Nancy le gusta mucho la “ropa típica” pero algunos de sus amigos a quienes les desagrada le dicen “que tan feo, que eso sólo los indios lo usan, pero nó les digo yo, si es bonito lo que somos, vale la pena”. Josefina tiene “una falda típica” y sandalias, bolsas, collares pero “cosas así como los cortes de los indígenas de verdad, eso no”.

<sup>248</sup> Dalila es profesora bilingüe cakchiquel-español recién egresada. Tecún Umán dice Dalila “fue un príncipe guerrero que luchó mucho por su gente y que cuando murió un ave voló sobre la sangre y le quedó el pecho rojo y por eso el quetzal es verde con pecho rojo. (Si es algo que ella le enseñaría a sus alumnos). Los personajes mas sobresalientes de la historia de Guatemala que ella enseñaría- Tal vez si estaría Tecún Umán pero no me recuerdo de otros. Tal vez si existen algunos otros que tomarían parte de la historia que me gustaría impartir pero en este momento no recuerdo. “Entre los personajes mas destacados de Guatemala, se debería tomar en cuenta a Miguel Angel Asturias” dice Leticia “....o tal vez Tecún Umán porque defendió a los indígenas. Don Tecún Umán. Fue un personaje histórico y yo les enseñaría eso para que ellos también aprendan a valorarse como indígenas. Yo he visto a algunas personas que si se avergüenzan de ser lo que son y se esconden dentro de un disfraz que no deberían de ponerse. Así yo tengo una compañera que si se le ve, porque se le ve pero quiere fingir lo que no es, para que no la discriminen que no la miren mal, de estar seguro uno de lo que es, de estar orgullosos de sus orígenes de lo que es”. ¿Y a ti que te decían sobre Tecún Umán en la escuela? “Bueno yo tenía entendido que Tecún Umán existió, dice Josefina, que peleó contra Pedro de Alvarado, que defendió Guatemala, que hirió al caballo de Pedro de Alvarado pensando que era su nahual, pensó que así se iba a morir Pedro. Pero ahora me vinieron a desmentir esa idea de que Tecún Umán es un mito que nunca existió. Era sólo para engañar. Es una forma de engañar al indígena guatemalteco y tratar de moldear nuestros pensamientos, que fue inventado para ver si podían manejarlos, y pues si porque yo si lo creía. Yo si creía en Tecún Umán”. ¿Qué sabes de Tecún Umán? le pregunto a Carmen. “Tecún Umán, se dice que luchó por su país pero tal vez era algo histórico, si pasó o no, no sé, pero se celebra el

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día de Tecún Umán". ¿Es algo que les importe a los estudiantes? "No, eso es algo que importa en la escuela, hay un instituto que así se llama, pero no es algo que en todas las escuelas ese día no haya clase, no haya actividades".

<sup>249</sup> Despite her pessimism about her own generation, Josefina anticipates that processes of national restitution will develop, beginning a more equal distribution of resources and a critical consciousness about the "non-national" element that self-denigrates and deceives Guatemalans. Dice Josefina: "Yo creo que el racismo viene del extranjero porque no es precisamente de acá sino que al entrar películas no nacionales, uno las cree, uno toma ese formato que uno es mejor que los demás y por eso los denigra. Yo pienso que no hay posibilidades de cambiar el engaño porque los medios de comunicación están invadidos, manipulados por los *gringos* y también están monopolizados. Yo pienso que eso es cosa de cada uno, de cada persona darse cuenta, que nadie es mejor que nadie, que todos somos iguales. Aparte es que no tengamos los mismos recursos. Pero de ahí si le quitan a uno los recursos queda uno igual al otro". En otra opinión en la cual pueden apreciarse reacciones difusamente nacionalistas ante el aprecio del extranjero por lo indígena, Nancy insiste en nuestra propia sangre ... "Existe racismo en Guatemala, dice Nancy, y es una vergüenza que se discrimine a nuestra propia sangre, sangre de la que todos llevamos. Es una vergüenza y da cólera que vengan de otros países a promocionar la cultura indígena, la cultura de Guatemala, porque aquí no se aprecia, se discrimina mucho a los indígenas y no se les da oportunidad de salir adelante". En su propia aproximación a la realidad del racismo, Eduardo se pregunta a si mismo "¿existe, no existe? Sin ir muy lejos, agrega: Mi abuelita (imitándola): 'Ay no! esos indios chis! Pero viene después esta gran ola, si se puede llamar así de lucha por los derechos de los indígenas y la teología de la liberación. La teología, dice Eduardo, se arraigó porque la mayoría de la población era una población pobre y además era una población indígena. La mayoría de la población en México, en Guatemala, Brasil no sé, la mayoría de la población es indígena, bueno no tienen acceso a educación muchos. Como que bueno, si yo no tengo plata, esa idea está bonita de que como aquellos están tirando el dinero, van al cine, van al teatro, van a parques de diversiones, y nosotros no tenemos ni para comernos una tortilla con frijol. Entonces porque la mayoría de la población era pobre y además no estaba educada, a eso se debe que la teología se haya arraigado entre la gente. Entonces como que allí se empezó a creer (en la existencia del racismo) pero de mala manera. Porque tampoco era para meterles comunismo y los únicos perjudicados, pues volvieron a ser los indígenas. Los comunistas vieron que el potencial estaba ahí, porque quiera que no, estaban reprimidos (los indígenas) y si se les exaltaba un poco, pues podían darle vuelta a la tortilla. Pero gracias a Dios no fue así porque hubiera sido peor tener un gobierno comunista, o tal vez hasta mejor estaríamos pero no por el comunismo, porque el comunismo de entrada está mal pero regresando a la pregunta, el racismo existe y hay que quitarlo. Y de que estoy en desacuerdo, estoy en desacuerdo. Pero ¿por qué hay que quitarle a los ricos para darle a los pobres? No es así. Hay que dar oportunidad para que los ricos se queden ricos y los pobres suban. No hacer una repartición de bienes sino simplemente darle más apoyo a los indígenas". Eduardo aborda sin muchos rodeos la cuestión económica como factor estratégico en la eliminación del racismo y resuelve el largo debate sobre la prioridad de lo étnico sobre lo clasista o a la inversa, defendiendo el derecho de los ricos a permanecer ricos y retratando a los indígenas no como pueblos étnicos que reclaman el reconocimiento a sus derechos sino como pobres que necesitan que se les brinde apoyo. No la cultura sino la economía y como resolver una a partir de la otra. "Entonces, dice Eduardo, no se levantan sólo los ricos sino también los pobres muy contrario de lo que es la teología de la liberación que es "quitámosle a los ricos para que los pobres se levanten". Es un desarrollo completo". En esta postura por la no mezcla y la segregación, es la plata y la educación abierta a quien la quiera y la pueda pagar y no la ladinización las encargadas de resolver la desigualdad social. "En Guatemala, prosigue Eduardo, los indígenas son como los negros en Estados Unidos que por más que se mezclen siempre van a ser negros. Yo pienso que la población indígena si se llega a mezclar se ladiniza. Pero esa no es la solución porque los inditos no son tontos y eso lo hablábamos antes que los inditos son bien listos, bastante listos. El problema no está en si son listos o no sino que llegue la educación a ellos, que puedan demostrar que son listos. Al venir y darles educación ellos ya no pensarán eso de "quitarles a los ricos para tener nosotros". Y eso porque lo estudiaron, porque pueden leer y además porque se van formando. Dicen esto ya no, sino, voy a trabajar para poder tener mi propia plata y eso es lo bonito del sistema democrático. Lo miraba hace poco que es bonito cuando uno se acaba de graduar de bachiller, tiene su título y está trabajando, y gana plata y pienso que con la plata que gana ahorita puedo mantenerme yo solo. En Estados Unidos se ve. Yo tengo unos primos que acaban de venir hace poco y cabal verdad, uno no ha salido de la universidad y ya tiene su carro, sus dos carros tiene, tiene su moto, vive viajando a donde quiera ¿por qué?, porque tiene plata, porque ha trabajado, se ha fajado para hacerlo y pienso que el indígena se daría cuenta de eso por medio de la educación. Entonces no es una solución que los indígenas se ladinicen porque uno probaría allí que no son tontitos, cosa que es mentira, ¿por qué?, porque hasta que se ladinizaran podrían salir adelante y yo pienso que no, que lo que hay que hacer es darles escuela, formación, educación, para que se levanten ellos como personas también. La matrícula universitaria debería ser totalmente abierta, a quien la quiera pagar y la pueda pagar. Yo pienso que lo que hay que darle es el estudio y eso lo tiene que hacer el Estado". Eduardo nunca tuvo compañeros indígenas en los colegios donde estudió pero desde su propia actitud paternalista y racista, intenta imaginar un futuro distinto para ambos, indígenas y ladinos. "Yo no estudié con ninguno que fuera indígena, pero si había uno en un grado arriba del mío que era muy inteligente, se llevaba con la gente pero lo utilizaban más como alguien para ir a ayudar con una cosa o con otra, sólo porque si. Después, estuve yendo a una reunión en la universidad y me tocó estar con indígenas. Nos mirábamos como compañeros y además como quiera que no el nivel así sube un poco pues es como que uno estuviera compitiendo contra ellos. Eran apellidos Xicaramac, apellidos Poc, apellidos Zum, apellidos de indígenas, puros indígenas, que habían logrado llegar alto pues porque entre esos hay muchos cabezotas. Yo pienso que tienen un IQ elevado y que podría llegar a suceder que se nos de vuelta a la tortilla y que los ladinos seamos los reprimidos. ¿Por qué?

The new intercultural nationalism combines the cultural pride for “Mayas arqueológicos”, the appreciation for the marimba, the landscape and many unresolved contradictions that point to US influence<sup>250</sup>. None of the young Guatemalans interviewed for this dissertation, talked about intercultural relations following the ideological contents disseminated by international agencies and non-governmental organizations<sup>251</sup>. However, there are some positive signs that the empowerment of Maya people is not necessarily provoking ethnic fears or secessionist attitudes<sup>252</sup>. The possibility of having more

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porque ellos podrían llegar a tener el mismo poder político y económico. Yo pienso que lo que hay que lograr es que haya una mezcla realmente entre las dos o sin mezcla, que se reconozca que los indígenas son igual que los Ladinos. Aunque reproduciendo la visión jerárquica y racista de los indígenas como sirvientes y el miedo étnico a que “se nos de vuelta a la tortilla”; Eduardo reconoce que entre los indígenas hay “cabezotas” con un “IQ elevado” y que es importante establecer una relación de igualdad entre ellos y los Ladinos a través de la educación y el fomento de los negocios privados.

<sup>250</sup> El 71% de los capitalinos, encuestados por Prensa Libre en septiembre del 2001 no cree que Guatemala sea libre. Los entrevistados argumentaron que las presiones e intromisiones extranjeras, así como la dependencia económica, en especial de Estados Unidos, son los principales obstáculos para una verdadera autosuficiencia del país”. “Hace cuatro años sólo el 56% de los entrevistados (de una muestra de 320) opinó que el país no ha alcanzado la independencia. Ahora, 15% más se une a ese criterio (en una muestra de 405 entrevistados). A pesar de esto el 92% admitió con orgullo ser guatemalteco, contra un 5% que no siente orgullo de vivir en un país tan pobre y con tanta delincuencia, y un 2% que omitió contestar”. “La mayoría - 60% - respondió que identifica el nacionalismo con el respeto a los símbolos patrios; en un segundo término el patriotismo - 27% - y el tercer lugar con el civismo -13% -. Además el sólo hecho de haber nacido en este país, ser guatemalteco es para el 71% parte del nacionalismo. La marimba y los trajes autóctonos también fueron identificados como parte del nacionalismo guatemalteco, por 22 y 7% respectivamente”. Erick Campos. La Fiesta Patria. *Prensa Libre*, 9 septiembre de 2001. Dice René Poitevin que en Guatemala “el proyecto nacional siempre ha sido débil, excluyente, opresivo y violento, “lo que ha dado como resultado una carencia de conciencia sobre nuestras raíces, queriéndolas sustituir, en algunos casos, con exclusividad sobre el mito de lo maya, que es un mito hijo de la globalidad y no da cuenta cabal del mestizaje de las mil hibridaciones que hemos sufrido a raíz de tanto trauma que ha sido nuestra historia, y que, por ello mismo, nos impiden ver, en conjunto, eso que se llama historia, como raíz fundante, como elemento primario de la identidad”. (Poitevin 2001:20)

<sup>251</sup> “Interculturalidad, dice Nancy, para mí sería como intercambiar culturas, que venga una persona de otro país que me de a conocer su cultura y yo le de a conocer la mía. Eso entiendo yo por interculturalidad”. “Es tener mi propia cultura y conocer la cultura de otras personas, ¿no? no sé si sea esto, dice Josefina, pero a veces en El Periódico, en la prensa aparecen anuncios en otros idiomas., No sé si sea eso. Pues yo entiendo esa palabra con esto del periódico. También venden un periódico, ese sí no se cual sea el nombre que es en inglés y vienen otras revistas en portugués. Eso es lo que entiendo yo por interculturalidad”. A manera de cierre le pregunto a Carmen ¿Cuales son los personajes más sobresalientes de la historia de Guatemala? “Bueno esta Tecún Umán, que se menciona bastante. El quetzal también se menciona porque tiene mucha relación con Tecún Umán, pero más que todo solo ellos dos.”

<sup>252</sup> A pesar de que Carmen es nieta de un inglés casado con una mujer hondureña que luego se vino a Guatemala y que su mamá es hondureña casada con un ladino guatemalteco, ella se siente guatemalteca y hasta indígena. “Yo creo que en el país hay más personas indígenas y prácticamente todos somos indígenas, dice Carmen, pero se hace mucha discriminación. La verdad es que se hace mucha discriminación con ellos y por eso es que hay veces que uno se topa con una persona indígena y uno los mira que son personas duras, son personas que no son ni sensibles, pero es por la misma discriminación. O el mismo hecho de que las personas digan, como lo dicen vulgarmente: “Ah, es un indio”. Y no debe ser así. Entonces lo que tiene que haber es igualdad para un indígena y para un ladino. O sea que tiene que ser todo igual”. ¿Por qué dices que “prácticamente todos somos indígenas”? “Todos somos indígenas, todos descendemos de personas indígenas. No tiene nada que decir que unos vivan en un departamento y otros aquí en la capital y todo, pues todo, todos los que vivimos en Guatemala somos indígenas”. ¿Pero porqué hay gente que no quiere reconocerlo? Es gente ignorante, es gente que dice, “ay es un indígena, ay no”. Esa es gente que es racista hasta cierto punto porque no quiere admitir y quiere hacer sentir mal a las personas que son así. Yo no soy así, o no sé, pero ellos (los indígenas) saben que de ellos descendemos, descendemos de indígenas”.



indigenous representatives in the State and in national politics is one of the main arenas which are a serious source of potential conflicts and also optimism about the emergence of new intercultural sensibilities. For instance, when I asked about what could be the reaction of most Guatemalans, indigenous or Ladinos, to the possibility of electing in the future a Maya politician for president, I received mixed reactions that reveal new meanings that need closer anthropological and political scrutiny.

Nancy, which attends a private working class school and is the daughter of a single mother, is convinced that if a Maya were to win the presidency of the country, the Ladinos or *blancos* would not let him to take power. She says:

(Los indígenas) están acostumbrados a que la gente blanca es la que tiene dinero y tiene todo. Y la gente indígena al ver que los blancos no aceptan a su presidente podrían crear una guerra interna porque (los ladinos) definitivamente no aceptarían ese tipo de autoridad indígena. No lo permitirían, (“los blancos”) pienso que no lo permitirían, porque ya está monopolizada la política, porque los que están en ese círculo no permiten que nadie entre y menos si es un indígena. Y si en todo caso lo hacen, es para callarle la boca a las masas, no lo hacen porque realmente consideren que son capaces de tomar ese cargo. Es bastante complejo porque como le platicaba la vez pasada, los indígenas tienen bastante resentimiento, porque desde que los españoles vinieron los tomaron. No sé como explicarlo. Al momento de estar en el poder ellos se van a sentir con el derecho de vengarse y poder hacer lo que ellos quieran para vengarse de los blancos y no creo que haya manera de evitarlo. Si un indígena ganara la presidencia, sería atacado verbal y hasta físicamente por las influencias de otros partidos. Si se da cuenta entre los políticos no hay ningún indígena. Álvaro Arzú es descendiente de españoles por lo que tengo entendido y un indígena sería atacado, incluso por los propios indígenas porque ellos tienen la ideología de que por que él es indígena, no va a saber que hacer con el país.

I asked Evelyn Rodríguez, a high school Ladino student belonging to the impoverished middle class of Guatemala City, what would happen if an indigenous politician, man or woman would run for the Presidency and she respond, taking for granted

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that the candidate would be a woman: “Pues ganaría, pero depende del partido que la apoyara o el partido que se forme para apoyarla”, she answered, probably influenced by the notoriety of the Peace Nobel Prize, Rigoberta Menchú Tum<sup>253</sup>. At another time, I inquired what an indigenous candidate would need to do in order to win the Presidency, and she went back to the possibility of a new war and the proliferation of “racismo al revés” (Hale 2000):

Lo que pasa es que al lanzarse un candidato indígena a la presidencia, igual va a seguir habiendo discriminación pero a favor de ellos y ellos van a tomar partido, sólo por su gente, y todos los indígenas se van a ir con ellos. Yo pienso en

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<sup>253</sup> Sobre la entrega del Premio Nobel de la Paz a Rigoberta Menchú, “algunos se preguntan ¿por qué?, ¿por qué se lo dieron a ella?, dice Josefina, ¿qué hizo?, y no se ha oído mucho de lo que hace. Pues yo tampoco no sé mucho de lo que ella haga pero si ganó el premio Nobel creo que fue por algo, porque Alfredo Nobel no dejó esos premios sólo porque sí. En la televisión algunos políticos la acusan de esto, algunos otros la defienden de que ¿por qué tiene tanto dinero?, ¿por qué se atiende médicamente en otro país? y cosas que a veces no tienen importancia”. Nancy estaba muy pequeña cuando le dieron el Nobel a Rigoberta Menchú. “La verdad es que no recuerdo. Eso fue hace mucho y yo estaba pequeña pero ya más adelante, cuando entendí las cosas, sentí que bueno que por lo menos una representante de los indígenas haya salido adelante y que haya ido a dar la cara por su cultura, que era algo muy importante”. Rogelio dice que “yo a Rigoberta Menchú la miro como una protagonista para que empiece a despertar la población indígena, de saber que hay una líder y que a partir de esa mujer van otras mujeres y otros hombres. Ella fue como esa imagen que tenía que surgir para que otras se dieran cuenta de que también tienen capacidad de hacer cosas. Ahora está Rosalinda Tuyuc. Hay académicas como la Otilia, incluso una que está dando clases en la universidad Landívar, y otras que se están recibiendo también. Rigo vino a despertar ciertos paradigmas que había en este país porque ella sí tenía una preparación. Está empezando a agarrar auge el liderazgo de las mujeres. Yo considero que la mujer es la persona idónea para administrar los bienes del hogar de la casa o de un negocio, por naturaleza considero de que son mucho más dadas a la administración, y a partir de eso te digo pues que ha agarrado un auge muy grande entre la población la presencia de mujeres líderes. Yo creo que se están rompiendo esas trabas, ese autoritarismo que tienen los hombres hacia las mujeres, te puedo decir el ejemplo de mi mamá que ella es la que le lleva las cuentas a mi papá, cuando no tiene mi papá dinero entonces le pide a ella, porque sabe que ella si le administra bien”. “La verdad es que Rigoberta se ganó el Premio Nobel de la Paz porque ella fue la que sufrió mas con toda esa guerra armada que hubo, aguantó hambre y por eso se lo ganó me imagino. La verdad es que no podría decir si se lo merece o no se lo merece porque yo no la ví”. Eso dice Amarilis hablando de su propia experiencia como mujer indígena. “Nosotros no conocemos a Rosalina Tuyuc aunque si la hemos visto en periódicos. Un día mi hermana la vió porque fueron a visitar un lugar de Tecpán, Iximché, y llegó ella con guardaespaldas y todo. Mi hermana me contó. He escuchado de ella, la he visto en periódicos, incluso cuando estábamos en cuarto año, nos vinieron a dar un taller sobre la discriminación que venía de parte de Rigoberta Menchú y nos dieron algunos folletos. Y también se nos invitó a todas las mujeres de traje indígena para que fuéramos otro día a una cafetería solo con una señora del equipo de ellas pero yo no pude ir esa vez porque fue día sábado. La verdad de mi sección nadie fue”. “Bueno, dice Eduardo, yo no pienso que ella podría llegar con los grupos indígenas y decir, “bueno vamos a hacer tal cosa”, porque ni los mismos grupos indígenas están unidos entre ellos. Los indígenas que entre si se pusieran de acuerdo, si armarían una revuelta, pero no. Pero bueno, (Rigoberta) fue una persona que hizo valer sus derechos y empezó a escribirse y a decirse sobre ella. Pero que ella tenga liderazgo, pienso que en su grupo étnico, en su aldea, bueno no aldea, pero en los cackchiqueles, no sé que sea Rigoberta Menchú, pero bajo los quichés.... Yo pienso que no hay un liderazgo indígena sino que es gente que medio se reúne. Es como que digamos a nivel empresarial, pues a nivel empresarial si existe, pues, organismos que se encargan de decir, bueno esto es lo que se va hacer y se hace. Es muy diferente, no es como la población negra en los Estados Unidos que si fuera muy unida, sería muy diferente. Yo creo que sí lo va a haber (un liderazgo) en los Estados Unidos, y cada vez va a ser mayor, hay gente de color que empieza a subir en lugares importantes, gente latina que también empieza a subir a lugares importantes, porque quiera que no, empiezan a ser mayoría en población y se necesita gente, tener un líder entre ellos. Yo pienso que en Guatemala se va a ir dando también y cada vez más, pero pienso que siempre tiene que estar ese equilibrio porque quiera que no, tampoco vamos a entrar en la teología (de la liberación).

lo que platicábamos la vez pasada, va a haber una especie de guerra interna, entre los blancos y los indígenas.

Seeing the contradictions of her answers, supporting “reverse racism” and at the same time having some expectations about Mayan politics, I insisted in another moment on the same topic and she replied: "Yo me imagino que habría una revolución porque la gente no está acostumbrada a este tipo de autoridad y no la aceptarían". Would you vote for an indigenous candidate for president? "Depende del partido y si cambiaran muchas cosas en Guatemala, yo digo que sí. Sé que los indígenas podrían progresar y eso sería un beneficio absoluto para Guatemala y sería mejor".

Despite her fears of an internal war, she would vote for an indigenous candidate, but it is of great consequence the importance given to the political party. This last observation is very instructive, because implies that some young people are more aware of the significance of institutional development as that of modern political parties more than the personal charisma, ethnicity or candidates' money. This position shows a rupture from previous generational frames that delegate political sovereignty upon individuals, the classic colonial *lista de notables*, instead of granting more power and political meaning to modern institutions as political parties<sup>254</sup>.

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<sup>254</sup> Carmen dice que los ladinos no aceptarían que personas indígenas llegaran a tomar control del Estado. "No lo aceptarían por lo mismo que ellos (los indígenas) todo lo que han pasado, ellos no serían igual. Ellos no serían como que fueran una persona de aquí de la capital o ladina porque en todo el país abundan más los indígenas. Entonces recibirían mucho más apoyo eso sí pero no sé. Yo vería que se haría lo contrario que lo que se hace con ellos, lo que hacen con ellos lo harían con nosotros, sería algo así". Nuevamente la postura del racismo al revés en Carmen como en Nancy coincide con la expectativa en torno a lo que el país obtendría si los indígenas ganaran mayor prominencia en el país. ¿Y si se organizara un partido predominantemente indígena, tú votarías por ellos? "Pues sería de ver que tanto ofrecen porque hay veces que dicen y dicen, pero sería de oírlos y ver cuales son sus perspectivas sobre el país. Entonces si uno ve que está bien, adelante verdad. Tal vez eso es lo que necesitan (los indígenas), tal vez eso es lo que necesita el país". Josefina dice que no tendría problema alguno con que el congreso nacional eventualmente fuera controlado por una mayoría indígena. "Pero también tendríamos que ver que capacidad tienen ellos, cual es su forma de pensar, que es lo que dicen, como se expresan, y si estuvieran bien, pues si los apoyaría y los apoyaría bastante. Su pensamiento y su capacidad serían más importantes que su ser indígena porque el ser indígena no creo que tenga mucho que ver." En torno a lo que sucedería si un maya llegara a la presidencia, Leticia dice: "Yo me imagino que toda la población ladina protestaría. No estaría de acuerdo. Pero es por nosotros que están aquí ellos. Es por nosotros que ellos están bien. Porque nosotros somos de aquí, nosotros tenemos riquezas que lamentablemente nos las quitaron, según las historias. Nosotros somos de Guatemala, somos Guatemala y gente de afuera española, vino aquí, nosotros somos de aquí".

Since the signing of the peace agreement in December 1996, one of the most dramatic consequences of the elite's lack of political will and resistance to economic reform has been the proliferation of poor people robbing other poor people<sup>255</sup>. Criticizing the incapacity of the government to control crime and clean the capital city, known during the good old times as the *Tacita de Plata*, an old 80 years old carpenter, told me that “después del viejo Ubico todos los presidentes que ha tenido Guatemala han sido unos afeminados” That generalized nostalgia for Ubico's *iron hand* is so common that there are sayings that affirm that every Guatemalan has his/her “pequeño Ubiquito” inside and that in the country there are only two kinds of people, “ubiquistas de derecha” and “ubiquistas de izquierda”. In a context where there still are not citizens, the conservative mainstream openly defends the State's right to take the life of anyone considered a threat against dominant morals and private property, just like Ubico had done.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> Como si fuera algo que carece de relevancia cotidiana, Josefina Trujillo hace una rápida revisión de algunas de sus experiencias con la delincuencia local: “Una vez cuando iba yo en la calle asaltaron a un señor que no les quiso dar el dinero y (los ladrones) le metieron un cuchillo en el estómago. Otra vez iba pasando yo entre dos camionetas y ví como entre 5 estaban asaltando a un señor mayor de 60 años. Después iba yo con mi mamá al mercado y le arrancaron a ella su bolsa. A mí papá lo asaltaron y yo también iba con él”. El hecho de que hayan ladrones, dice Nancy Martínez “tiene mucho que ver con el ambiente en donde uno se desarrolla cuando es pequeño. Cuando este tipo de personas llegan a adultas, se les cierran muchas puertas y les es imposible desenvolverse, entonces optan por lo más fácil y es que las otras personas que tienen el poder de ayudarlas, les cierran las puertas. Y no es que sean haraganas pero si no hay trabajo, no hay nada para que ellos se desenvuelvan, entonces no tienen otra opción. Lo que pasa es que hay poco trabajo y en lo poco que encuentran las personas no quieren hacer la gran cosa, quisieran agarrar un trabajo fácil y ganar mucho y al ver que es muy poco lo que ganan no quieren trabajar y entonces prefieren dedicarse a robar, porque así se consigue más. Cuesta bastante porque la gente ahora es desconfiada y todo lo quiere regalado. Además si le dan algo a uno obviamente quieren algo a cambio, no va a ser de gratis. Yo pienso que hay gente que quiere por mal, porque se le habla y a veces hasta todo es gratis pero realmente no quieren, sino que quieren por la mala. Y este tipo de gente es la que pudre a la demás...” ¿Y que hacer con estos que pudren a los demás? “Es difícil porque ya son grandes y las mañas como que no se les quitan muy fácilmente”. Nancy cuestiona el estereotipo del haragán y de la haraganería pero al mismo tiempo mantiene la observancia autoritaria sobre los “mañosos” que “pudren a los demás” y “quieren por la mala”. Aquí el higienismo social le gana a la simpatía por los desheredados y emergen los principios de una modernidad política basada en el uso jurídicamente legitimado de la fuerza para someter a los que solo “quieren por la mala”. Los “mañosos” o el ser mañoso de la percepción popular está presente en la jerga utilizada por la prensa para retratar el mundo de los maleantes, que por lo general es el mismo en el que sobreviven los mas pobres.

<sup>256</sup> Le pregunto a Lourdes Marroquín, ¿es rehabilitable el delincuente o se justifica la pena de muerte en los casos mas extremos? -Se justifica, me responde a secas. Así con respuestas lacónicas como sentencias inapelables se expresa en la limpieza social en contra de delincuentes y subversivos, un fenómeno que permitió a personajes como el general Efraín Ríos Montt capitalizar en su favor la criminalización de la pobreza y del autoritarismo como forma de gobierno y relación social. Este mismo laconismo se nota por ejemplo en las vallas panorámicas en la calzada Roosevelt y en la carretera al occidente de la república donde con parquedad castrense se le recuerda al transeúnte: “No son sugerencias, son mandamientos”. “Algunos de los adultos que se dedican a robar son rehabilitables”, dice Josefina, “pero yo lo veo desde

For Carmen Sagastume, a working class Ladino student attending the last year of high school:

“Se necesita mano dura con la delincuencia porque a veces aquí agarran a un ladrón, le robó a uno, lo llevan a la cárcel y al otro día ya está...(libre). Lo más que lo tienen son ocho horas y ya está afuera, ¿Qué va a hacer? volver a robar. Hace falta que lleguen al gobierno personas que de verdad tengan el propósito de mejorar al país y no satisfacerse ellos mismos, sino que busquen de verdad enderezar las cosas. O sea se necesita un poco de mano dura porque no se puede hacer todo fácil y todo blando sino siempre con mano dura pero correcta”<sup>257</sup>.

Carmen says that “tal vez los guatemaltecos solo creen en la mano dura pero eso no es culpa de los que estamos aquí ahorita. Eso viene desde la invasión de los españoles. A partir de ese momento todo empezó a salir mal porque se aprovecharon de los indígenas que estaban y a partir de ahí los dominaron, pusieron mano dura sobre ellos y ahí fue cuando los indígenas y el resto de los guatemaltecos ya no pudieron liberarse de esa

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un punto de vista religioso. Si usted viene y entra a una cárcel y les predica la palabra de Dios, hay quienes la van aceptar. Ellos pueden cambiar y de hecho hay personas que han cambiado. Pero si no lo hacen, creo que no se pueden rehabilitar porque esa ya es su mentalidad. Al aceptar a Cristo como su Salvador ya todo en ellos cambia. Es un cambio drástico, total. Y si no cambian estas personas que secuestran y asesinan, en la misma Biblia está escrito que se les puede condenar a muerte. Nosotros tenemos derecho de condenar a muerte pero dicen que el único que decide quién vive y quién muere es Dios. Pero Dios también nos dió la oportunidad de elegir porque en la Biblia dice que Él podrá perdonarnos pero también tenemos que cumplir las faltas que nosotros hayamos hecho aquí. Entonces a esas personas se les podría dar la oportunidad pero a la hora que no cumplieran, creo que tendríamos el derecho a decidir su futuro”. “La sociedad debe mantener la pena de muerte”, dice Josefina “pero no por maldad sino porque ellos (los delincuentes) no tuvieron pena, no les dió lástima matar a las personas. En la misma Biblia dice que nosotros podemos hacer lo mismo y no es por maldad porque a veces yo lo digo y las personas piensan que soy mala y una vez me dijeron inhumana por lo que dije, pero siento que no, no soy inhumana” Puede ser que el delincuente sea rehabilitable, dice Carmen Sagastume, “pero podrían sufrir más personas mientras que con la pena de muerte el único que va sufrir va a ser él y así se pueden salvar más vidas inocentes. Si se van a componer pues que bueno, pero ya personas así es muy difícil que se encaminen correctamente. Eso de la pena de muerte la verdad no tiene acuerdo porque nadie tiene el derecho de quitarle la vida a nadie. Pero así como ellos lo hacen que tan fácil matan a la gente y se sienten bien, esa es una forma de castigarlos. La verdad si se encontrara alguna otra forma de poder solucionar eso, yo si eliminaría la pena de muerte, pero si no hay otra...”

<sup>257</sup> Nancy piensa que “está mal la violencia porque genera mas violencia y eso no es nada bueno”<sup>257</sup>. Dice que si en sus manos estuviera, ella llevaría a cabo “muchas pláticas, muchos talleres que le hagan conciencia a esas personas, promovería actividades recreativas de pintura, culturales, deportivas pero especialmente crearía fuentes de trabajo, inventaría una forma de proporcionar trabajo a esas personas, pero también mantendría la pena de muerte”. Dalila dice que “no son necesarios los castigos. Para mí que si un niño comete una falta se debería hablar con el niño. Primero hablarle y animarlo o preguntarle porque cometió esa falta para que no lo vuelva a hacer. Yo creo que no (que la gente sea llevada por mal) porque todos somos humanos y se debería darle la oportunidad a la persona. Hablar con él, platicar porque a veces también pasa por los problemas psicológicos que un niño es muy rebelde o hace cosas que no debería de hacer porque necesita apoyo moral. Ya cuando son delincuentes ya se podría aplicar el castigo pero primero se tiene que hablar con él antes de castigarlo”.

opresión. Her preference for “mano dura pero correcta” express the feelings of thousands of Guatemalans who believe in coerced force as a way of establishing social order. But she goes beyond and risks an interpretation about the nature of dictatorship pushing back the historical temporality to the early conquest and colony, and inventing a sense of “us” (indigenas and “el resto de los guatemaltecos”) that share a common history of oppression.

Which is better, a dictatorship or a democracy? I asked Rosalina Enriquez, a student about to finish her high school in a middle-class institution. “Todo tiene su lado bueno y su lado malo”, she argued,

La democracia le da a escoger entre lo bueno y lo malo, la dictadura se la imponen a uno, pero hay gente que no capta eso, que no capta lo bueno de la democracia, ellos creen que libertad es libertinaje y en eso están muy equivocados. Creen que con la democracia pueden hacer todo lo que les da la gana y por eso es que los políticos o las autoridades se ven obligadas a veces a aplicar disciplina o dictadura porque la gente no entiende.

One day I was talking with Josefina, the only student that call herself mestiza, about national politics and asked her to tell me who were the most representative characters of Guatemalan history. “Ubico, creo que es el único”, she answered. And from current times?, I insisted. “Ah, de estos tiempos está difícil, no hay nadie”. Josefina said:

La mayor parte de los guatemaltecos piensan que los políticos solo dicen palabras bonitas pero yo no espero que alguien me diga que tengo que hacer. Voy a hacer lo que yo crea que sea necesario para mi país, lo que yo creo correcto. Por eso pienso que está bien dicho eso de que la democracia la va a hacer cumplir el que la pida. El guatemalteco hace caso a todo lo que le digan. Se dió cuenta por ejemplo como ya no se volvió apoyar al PAN y este se vino abajo y se eligió al presidente actual.

Would you call that democracy?

-Ay yo siento que sí

And it is that better than dictatorship?

- Yo preferiría una dictadura un poco estricta, un poco rígida

Like which?

- Como la de Fidel Castro

Why Fidel Castro?

Aquí en la historia de Guatemala me gustaría que hubiera otro Ubico pero así como Fidel Castro porque él tiene sus propias ideologías, no deja que entren influencias de otros países al país, sus productos se quedan en el país, los mismos ciudadanos del país disfrutan de lo que ellos producen. En cambio aquí, el mejor producto de vegetales se exporta y lo que casi no sirve se queda aquí en Guatemala. Entonces eso no me gusta, no me gusta que nosotros nos quedemos con lo peor de lo mejor que tenemos

And Castro was able to do that in Cuba?

- Si, por eso no lo quieren, o sea Estados Unidos al ver que no pueden manejar ese país, creo que es por eso que tanto lo odian.

Why that dictator would need to be like Ubico?

Porque mi mamá me cuenta que mi abuela le contaba, que antes usted venía al parque central y dejaba su bolsa ahí o cualquier cosa suya, se iba, se acordaba en la casa regresaba y ahí encontraba la bolsa. No había delincuencia, en cambio ahora sale de su casa y no sabe si va a regresar vivo.

As in the popular saying that divides Guatemalans into “ubiquistas de izquierda and ubiquistas de derecha”. I found among young Guatemalans, contrasting opinions about the political fantasy of having “an Ubico like Fidel Castro”, including perspectives that combine State and neoliberal approaches in favor of national progress. The preference for authoritarian rule over liberal democracy is a reaction against the slowness of social change and the inefficacy and corruption of traditional politicians. Upper and middle classes in Guatemala support the iron hand against organized crime and the shortening of the State but at the same time their neoliberal opposition to pay taxes or better wages, works against the formation of a collective sense of political togetherness, indispensable for the development of citizenship. Racial and class prejudices are in the rise and the

pauperization of Ladino working classes creates conditions for new scenarios in which the disenchantment with conventional “democracy” increases the expectations about the belligerence of the indigenous movement<sup>258</sup>

## Conclusions

After the dismantling of revolutionary nationalism, processes of civilization and development in Guatemala moved from the “Indian Problem” to the “Youth Problem”, similar to processes in other countries where dictatorship and internal war against communism, impoverished middle classes, pauperized working classes and institutionalized terror as part of daily life. The “Youth problem” is the youth of the lower strata. As much in the discourse on youth produced by the dictatorship of Estrada Cabrera as in the chronicles describing the movement that brought him down in 1920, the young “white” and Ladino elite are present in the capital city and the main cities of the provinces. During the 1920’s and 1930’s the young elite was influenced by nationalist indigenism derived from the Mexican Revolution, and to a lesser extent, from vitalism, Marxism, Italian fascism, German nazism and the construction of socialism in the former Soviet

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<sup>258</sup> For example, in the same line of “an Ubico like Fidel Castro”, Eduardo Mansilla says: “Hace poco yo leía que Castro estudió con el gerente general de la Coca-Cola, entonces bueno los dos venían de una cuna muy buena, pero a él (a Castro) no le pareció Estados Unidos y se fué a encerrar a Cuba e hizo de Cuba otro país. Cuba económicamente no está bien, tiene unos grandes problemas porque le han hecho embargos y le han hecho cosas y le han hecho todo, mientras que este otro que era el gerente de la Coca-Cola dijo no, yo me voy a trabajar a los Estados Unidos y levantó la Coca-Cola, le subió las acciones al 300% algo así, una cosa impresionante. Entonces, los dos muy buenos y los dos la levantaron. Sin embargo, pienso que lo que Fidel Castro ha hecho es usar el dinero del pueblo para el pueblo y eso es una cosa que en cualquier lado funcionaría. Si en Guatemala el dinero del pueblo se usara para el pueblo no para hacer más rico al presidente todo sería diferente, ¿por qué?, porque Fidel Castro si lo usa para el pueblo es porque tal vez él ya se llenó de plata, entonces para qué quiere más, aunque se que siempre se puede querer más, pero igual en Estados Unidos no puede tener cuentas bancarias, en Suiza me imagino que también se las tocan, no puede, entonces ¿en dónde?, En Cuba. Es donde empieza a mejorar él y además empieza a mejorar Cuba. Entonces pienso, así como Ubico lo hizo aquí en Guatemala, usó el dinero del pueblo para el pueblo y además dejó las arcas llenas y el oro de la reserva monetaria. Pienso que si en Guatemala nuestro mismo presidente usara el dinero, al menos su partido volvería a ganar aunque Guatemala quiere cambio, le gustan los cambios y es en realidad contradictorio, porque un cambio ideológico haría un zafarrancho total, pero un cambio en el gobierno no”



Union. During the 1940's and 1950's there prevailed in Guatemala a vision of youth framed by the euphoria of the fall of fascism in Europe, the urbanization of Latin America and the admiration for the *free world* and the fight against communism promoted by the United States. A national version of these processes in which youth is the main actor can be found in the works of the ex-president (1945-1950) Juan José Arévalo. In his writings, he tells of his experiences as a student, pedagogue and statesman, analyzing the relationship between youth, democracy and political modernization. After 1954, young Guatemalan men and women participated in the space created by the anticommunist and Christian organizations, in the student movement, the union movement, the guerrilla insurgency, the cooperative movement, the struggle of the Mayan people and the indigenous women's mobilizations. From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, indigenous youth was present in the dominant imaginary when "brazos" were needed for agriculture or for the Army, or when the threat of popular uprisings in rural areas justified to bolster "the empire of the law" by the State. But it was not until the 1990s that the representation of youth in Guatemala began to include photographs, paintings, writings and voice recordings or transcripts of Mayan youth. Still, when thinking of youth in Guatemala, the images conjured are those of affluent urban youngsters from the upper, middle or working classes, a non-indigenous youth that has access to public or private education. The idea of youth in these terms is linked to consumer power and the indispensable cultural capital to be recognized as a member of a generational and political community which enjoys a superior status at a national and international level. In this sense, the lives of thousands of young people and the political scenario during the new post-war era resembles that of Indonesia, where after the massive killing of political activists, the criminalization of young and poor people stimulated the surge of *phantasmatic violence*. The counter-cultural agency of the

*Mara* and the social overlapping of *maras estudiantiles* and *maras territoriales* during the past thirty years, has reinforced beligerant class and racial discourses and prejudices. The *gente decente* have reacted against the presence of the plebeian multitude. They oppose their social mobility, which has been stimulated by the emergence of the new rich and the migration of working-class Mayas and Ladinos to the US who gain access to the English language and new technologies, giving them more power in political arenas that favor democratic modernization. These factors have expanded the symbolic wars between *gente decente* and *gente corriente* as are revealed in the documents and evidence examined in this chapter. That *cholerization* of society accentuated the anti-Indian sentiment and the racial stigmatization of working class Ladinos, a phenomenon that rarely appears in the conventional ethnographic approaches of foreign anthropologists. Working-class Ladinos as *choleros* have particular repertoires that are not positioned exclusively in the terms decided by the elite's anti-Indian racism and should be unveiled through more case studies.

## Chapter IV

### *Choleros in the Valle de los Muertos*<sup>259</sup>

Relations between working-class Ladinos and indigenous people that could be considered *shumos*, *mucos* or *choleros*, in modern Guatemala City from its foundation in 1776 up to the present day have yet to be investigated. In this chapter I present a case study of popular Ladinos that can be considered *choleros* or *gente corriente* and their economic, political and cultural interactions with indigenous people in an urban setting in Guatemala City. I highlight some ambiguities and contradictions that exemplify the power of racism and Whiteness among those working class Ladinos and their reactions toward the empowerment of Maya movement. This chapter offers a general panorama of these relationships in a specific setting, that for the purposes of this investigation I named colonia Rafael Arévalo, located in the zone 7, the largest zone of Guatemala City.<sup>260</sup> The nine sections of this article describe aspects of population, economy, political history, the role of religion, and inter-ethnic relations.

#### **Popular Ladinos and *Mayas Arqueológicos***

A fair number of the residents who came to settle in the Rafael Arévalo district were impoverished ladinos from the capital, originally living in the old neighborhoods of La Merced, La Candelaria, Jocotenango and La Parroquia, there were also indigenous and ladino families from the *departamentos* of El Quiché, Alta Verapaz and Chimaltenango.

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<sup>259</sup> I chose the title of this chapter after reading the brief but stimulating piece in which Flavio Rojas Lima (2000) tells about how the construction of the Calzada Roosevelt in Guatemala City was "a stab in the chest of Kaminaljuyú" and proposes changing its name to Calzada Kaminaljuyú.

<sup>260</sup> For a brief description of the way in which the private sector took advantage of the construction of Roosevelt Boulevard and of the partition of Kaminal Juyú see the research work prepared by Amanda Morán Mérida (1997) for the Universidad of San Carlos.

The lack of provisions for archaeological heritage in the urban development program, combined with the negligence of the authorities and the commercial interests of real estate speculators and construction companies, meant that many of these residents, and the others that followed throughout the period from the fifties to the seventies, built their houses on land that was part of the ancient pre-Hispanic city of Kaminal Juyú. Many residents, particularly men over the age of forty, remember the remains of the ancient city as an area full of mounds, much more extensive than the fenced-in space visitors currently call Kaminal Juyú.<sup>261</sup> An important part of the subjectivity of the residents of districts such as Rafael Arévalo, where streets remained unpaved up to the beginning of the 1990s, was constructed around the prehispanic city of Kaminal Juyú. The old Kaminal was a favorite spot for children to play soccer, wrestle, slide down the ramps of the monuments on pieces of cardboard, climb the mounds for a view of the city, nap for a while after playing all day, or, towards the end of November, cut *chiribisco* for the Burn the Devil celebration of December 7.

The majority of children and adolescents also played among the hills which extended through the whole area now occupied by the neighborhoods of Uatlán, Ciudad de Plata, Tikal, the Democracy Park, the lands of the Giordani and Palmieri families, and La Palangana, a prehispanic ball-game court, located at the edge of the La Verbena neighborhood, and now used as a soccer field and training area by nearby schools. Many adults remember how city projects such as widening the streets or installing drainage or water mains uncovered shards, artifacts, small figurines and pots, almost invariably

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<sup>261</sup> From an original piece of land measuring five thousand square meters, with more than 200 mounds, only 13 city blocks are considered reserved area. In Francisco Hurtarte, "Kaminal Juyú y su historia." *Siete Días en la USAC* no. 161, June 14 – 20, 1982, p. 5.

destroyed by heavy machinery or the tools of laborers making ditches for the foundations of houses. Others searched for figurines among the fresh turned earth of cornfields belonging to indigenous families, and each had his or her own little collection of the small obsidian knives that would surface in the dirt of unpaved roads after a prolonged rainfall.

Since for the new ladino residents it was very difficult to come up with extra money to pay builders to level the prehispanic mounds, the majority of these lots were acquired by indigenous families who with shovel and pickaxe would convert the mounds into bricks and adobe slabs, which in turn were used to build new houses in Rafael Arévalo and its surrounding neighborhoods. In several families, while the men made the adobe and the bricks, the women made tortillas to sell to the Ladinos in the area. Most of the original inhabitants were artisans and small traders, owners of businesses that disappeared or passed into the hands of the next generation. From the 1970s to the end of the 1980s, for example, a ladino woman now deceased, who lived with her family in a group of shacks shared with another three families, supported her family buying and selling flour sacks. The children later became machine operators, then owners of a workshop and a trailer. Another ladino woman, the wife of a shoemaker, made and sold tortillas with the help of two indigenous single mothers. After the death of her husband, she closed the tortilla shop and migrated to the US. The tortilla business on that block fell into the hands of a group of four young indigenous women, almost girls, supervised by their aunt. In another house where the grandmother had operated a tortilla shop one of her daughters opened a diner. Where there was a grocery there is now a bookstore. What had been a carpentry shop is now a warehouse. Where before there was a truck-garage there is now an evangelical temple.

At the end of the 1970s and during the 1980s, as a result of the destruction of the micro-economy and the generalization of political violence in the interior, more indigenous families moved to Rafael Arévalo. New diners, tortilla shops, grocery stores and auto repair businesses were opened, and indigenous presence increased in the Catholic congregation, the evangelical churches, the primary schools and the San Judas market. This surge in indigenous presence, about which more will be said later, did not eliminate racial prejudice in the ladino population, but did generate slightly more interest in knowing the ailments of those who had experienced first hand the atrocities of the armed conflict. In the Catholic churches in particular, a feeling began to grow that Christian duty meant fighting discrimination against indigenous people and working to promote social justice. When the streets were finally paved in the early 1990s, the memory of Kaminal Juyú moved a step further away from the daily lives of modern city dwellers. The paving, carried out as part of the self-help experiments funded by municipal authorities, increased traffic and caused more businesses to open. These businesses form part of a penny economy; it would be excessive to term “penny capitalism”, Sol Tax’s (1953) expression referring to some nucleuses of indigenous economy in the western highlands.

### **Intercultural Poverty and Criminalization**

Most of the businesses in Rafael Arévalo are stores and workshops of various kinds. There are more tortilla shops than bakeries, and more bars than schools or churches. There are very few lawyers, accountants, dentists, doctors or other professionals. The mosaic includes grocery stores, bakeries, dress shops, barber shops, pharmacies, hardware stores, auto parts stores, printing presses, butcher shops, carpentry shops, mattress makers, upholsterers, shoemakers, auto and motorcycle repair, body shops, metalwork, electrical

appliance repair, tire repair, photography studios, diners, whorehouses, Catholic and evangelical schools, and an endless number of micro-businesses no more elaborate than a small hand-painted sign on the wall, the door or the window of the family house, advertising houses painted, injections given, items for sale—fruit, cheese, ice cream, cakes, or any other homemade delicacy.

Responding to the increase in burglaries of the last few decades, many of these businesses installed iron bars, sometimes at a cost exceeding the value of the scant merchandise on display. This is an example of the aberrations created by the lack of employment, which forces poor people to protect themselves from other poor people and leads them to reproduce a mentality which criminalizes the poor, blaming delinquency on an over-population of bums who don't want to work for a living. Just as in the rest of the country, the criminalization of poverty has been used efficiently in Rafael Arévalo to justify the use of force to combat crime. An engineering student, co-owner of a small company providing electromechanical services says: "How are you going to teach a thief to work, when he makes at least two, three, five hundred quetzals in one day of lazy thieving—ten times what he'd make in a factory?" Adding elements to this conceptualization of productivity that makes no connection between the agrarian structure of the country and the lack of jobs, the owner of a clothing store comments that he would like to find someone to answer two questions: "Why do Guatemalan people look for work without expecting to find any?" and "Why, once they have a job, do they do everything possible to lose it?" These questions are representative of a general feeling among business owners, whether indigenous or ladino, that jobs are plentiful in Guatemala but the people don't take them because they're lazy and prefer stealing.

The oldest residents invariably recall the time of the dictatorship of General Jorge Ubico (1931-1944) when there were no bums in the streets, and street crime was practically nonexistent. Many interviewees feel that the low productivity of employees is because “Guatemalans are lazy by nature,” they lack initiative and are accustomed to taking advantage of their employer whenever the opportunity presents itself. Low productivity and passive resistance to work are almost never attributed to low salaries or lack of stimulus and benefits. Moreover, although most indigenous or ladino residents can’t afford domestic help, older ladinos tend to reproduce racist stereotypes about lazy servants, and the belief that each person has been assigned his or her position on the social scale through divine grace. With such poor employment prospects, university educated job-seekers find themselves in jobs that are below the level of their professional qualifications. Skilled laborers, unable to find work in the big companies, have joined up with others who are no better off, but who own tools and equipment. Many of the workshops that abound in the neighborhood have arisen in just this way, taking the form of cooperative micro-businesses, where social security, vacation pay, Christmas bonuses, medical benefits and paid leave are individual agreements rather than official legal provisions.

It is important to point out that for several years now, ‘indigenous’ and ‘poor’ are no longer seen as basically synonymous. Many indigenous are less poor than the Ladinos, and some are substantially richer. Among Ladinos, it is common to hear praise for the dedication and vigor with which the indigenous operate their businesses—though not seldom, as in other contexts, the praise is accompanied by racist commentary ridiculing, for example, their way of speaking Spanish, their diet, musical preferences, physical features, Mayan surnames or rural customs.



## ***Choleros' Political Worldview***

The history of the population's relationship with the State in the colonia Rafael Arévalo may be studied through the stories of the families who have lived longest in the neighborhood; these generally tend to be large families as well. One such is the Mejía family, who arrived in 1940, when the first houses were being built. Until the influence of the armed conflict between the insurgents and the army began to inhibit residents from expressing their opinions, the Mejía family were known as "the Arbencistas" (supporters of Arbenz). The label arose particularly because of the experience and attitudes of the now deceased parents of the family: Doña Lola, who never concealed her pride in her indigenous heritage, and don Zeledón, who was the director of a bricklayers union during the governments of Juan José Arévalo (1945-1950) and Jacobo Arbenz (1950-1954). To date, many residents discreetly remember, some with sympathy, others with reproach, the way in which don Zeledón would express his devotion to "Father Sun" or "Mother Moon," questioning the sanctity of the Catholic Church and the divine authority of the Pope. Together they had nine children, of which only two have died: Emilio, a bricklayer, died from the consequences of alcoholism, and Federico, a barber, committed suicide, not before trying to eliminate his four children. Of the remaining seven, Josué owns an auto repair shop; Marco Tulio became a Mormon at a young age and after several years in the United States returned to Guatemala to join the evangelical mission of his church; Leonel was a carpenter for many years until he stopped drinking and turned to the trade of electrical mechanic; Edmundo has worked all his life behind the counter in a motorcycle parts store; Aurora, the only woman, was a seamstress for many years and now works as a nurse; Bersaín and Rorcael, the youngest of the family, 51 and 50 years old respectively, have

both been working in their brother Josué's auto repair shop for the last thirty years. They are the ones who to a certain extent replicate the indigenous pride of their mother and the anticlerical position of their father. All of the children married and had children of their own except for the deceased Emilio, and Bersaín, who decided to remain single and still lives in the old family home. For the purposes of studying the political history and the interethnic relations in Rafael Arévalo, this chapter presents a few of the opinions of Bersaín and Rorcael, which exemplify the worldview of many working-class ladinos in Guatemala City, those who in the eyes of the ruling elite may be considered *shumos* or *choleros*.

Bersaín never went to school, and Rorcael only went as far as sixth grade. Throughout their lives they have both invested a considerable part of their free time in self-education. As well as being a mechanic by trade, Bersaín became a self-taught painter after the earthquake on February 4<sup>th</sup> 1976. Rorcael put himself through secondary school, got his adult high-school diploma, and went on to study Humanities at university—however, he had to abandon school when he found that his work did not leave him time to complete his university assignments. Bersaín says that what he remembers most about the governments of Arévalo and Arbenz is the children's dining hall that operated in the neighborhood:

What a feeding they'd give...the trucks would arrive at six in the morning and leave what now they only give to the army. Aaah...the best fruit, the best vegetables; you had to line up to go in and eat, and when you went into the hall it was all lit up, and since they served us soup in a mug with a round rim underneath, we'd get the tortilla and make ourselves little tortillas with the bottom of the mug to play with while we ate. We'd grab them and they were delicious, and they gave us cod liver oil, and whoever didn't drink it didn't get fed.

Rorcael and Bersaín were only four and five years old respectively when the coup of 1954 took place, and as sons of an Arbencista bricklayer, found themselves for many

decades stigmatized as enemies of the government, despite the fact that they were never activists for the armed insurgents, and that their opinions hardly coincide with the left wing positions of Guatemalan university-goers. In some way they represent the thought of wide sectors of the populace that were silenced by the armed conflict, and continue to be ignored by the intellectual and academic elite. Bersaín and Rorcael are well-known in the neighborhood for their verbal energy and their willingness to socialize, and this has allowed them to enjoy a leadership role in the workshop where they work and among the circle of friends who are often to be found at the spontaneous discussions that take place in Rosy's grocery store, one of the many neighborhood stores that offer a couple of tables and some chairs for whoever wants to sit down for a bite to eat, a soda or beer, or simply to pass away the time chatting without buying anything.

Other residents, particularly the senior citizens, stay away from these meetings, and if asked their opinion about national politics, prefer to speak of the dictatorship of General Jorge Ubico or of the governments of Colonel Enrique Peralta Azurdia (1963-1966) and General Carlos Manuel Arana Osorio (1970-1974). Most say little or nothing about the events which followed the fall of Arbenz in 1954, and even less about their personal experience or the experiences of their families during the years of armed conflict. The fear of being identified as an enemy of the government is very prevalent among the people. The traumas inflicted by the institutionalization of terror remain fresh, and a frequent initial reaction upon being asked to give an opinion about the State is to criticize the role of the security corps in political oppression, or their inefficiency in eliminating crime from the streets. As regards their experience of public participation, most go from silence to skepticism or open rejection of the political parties, though since the signing of the peace

treaty in 1996, people are more interested in becoming informed about national political activity.

In the mid 1960s, the Rafael Arévalo district, like many other districts of Guatemala City, was the scene of house-to-house searches in an attempt to locate the German ambassador Karl von Spretti, who was kidnapped and later executed by the guerillas. Although martial-law, curfews and helicopter patrols became frequent with the government of Julio César Méndez Montenegro (1966-1970) and continued for the next thirty years, as late as the mid 1970s young people were still accustomed to gather on street corners to listen to music or to go wandering the streets at night, almost always finishing in one of the bordellos of the surrounding zones or in a Chinese restaurant. After the earthquake in 1976, and particularly with the regime of General Romeo Lucas (1978-1982), Guatemala City residents had to accustom themselves to more frequent army and police patrols; to the sound of helicopters arriving to search the area, or passing overhead on their way to the mountains in the west; to the sirens of ambulances and patrol cars; to cars without license plates, full of heavily armed men; to curfews and martial law, the national television and radio networks, the nighttime shootings and the general fear of leaving home after dark. Corpses which no one dared claim—mutilated, or bearing marks of torture—were carried to the nearby graveyard of La Verbena, and buried with “XX” on their grave marker. This added one more negative ingredient in the relationship between the State and the population of the surrounding neighborhoods. People came to think of the State as an uncontrollable force linked to violence, impunity and abuse.

Although the 1986 elections in which Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo won the presidency temporarily lessened voter abstentionism and generated expectations for real change, hope

vanished quickly. Even during those times it remained unsafe to walk the streets after dark. For at least the last twenty years, residents have been organizing their activities to fit into daylight hours, and plan their trips in the city and their social gatherings accordingly. Violence has secluded people in their homes, and churches have benefited from the lack of socialization or therapeutic spaces.

As in other areas and neighborhoods of Guatemala, the Rafael Arévalo has its own population of people who have been psychologically maimed by violence, unemployment and poverty. Each family, we might say, has found a way to bear in silence the burden of its own afflictions and the memory of its dead. This does not imply that death is no longer spoken of in jest, as an everyday occurrence or as divine mandate. Families which have lost members to political violence, or have relatives who were kidnapped and disappeared, reserve the most intimate spaces of memory for them. It is not unusual that, after drinking heavily during a party or celebration, someone collapses in tears, faints or is unable to breathe and needs to be laid down, given some drug, a sip of bitter coffee or *ruda* tea to restore their calm. I observed during the course of this investigation two such incidents. First, at a wake, and second, towards the end of a birthday party, the bereaved-victim suddenly started sobbing, while the other guests went on talking, eating and drinking. At first the people didn't pay attention or say anything, until the afflicted person started muttering unintelligible phrases, swearing and pronouncing death-threats which gradually turned to shouting and violent sobbing. Up to then, the more sober responded by hugging the man, calling him by affectionate diminutives or even shedding some tears of their own, though more quietly. Others were more emphatic and even appeared angered, and talked to the man with almost insulting severity, reminding him that the loved person was dead

and needed to be left to rest in peace. The bereaved-victim responded with more tears and asked for more drink, which made the atmosphere tense again. Right in the middle of the commotion several women—perhaps the aunt, the mother, an older sister, a neighbor—came in praying to a varied constellation of saints and divinities, beginning with the Virgin Mary and the Lord Jesus Christ, and then going on to specific prayers in accordance to the spiritual genealogy of the family and its devotional preferences. Almost two hours later, after a great catharsis, some went to bed, exhausted, although, of course, the main thing was to get the person who started the commotion to lie down and sleep.

In the Rafael Arévalo neighborhood, the domestic interpretation of violence as a space of interethnic relations acquired some importance in the mid-eighties, when, thanks to the information provided by national and international human rights organizations, people learned the dimension of the massacres and the destruction of indigenous villages in Guatemala's rural areas. Among ladino youth, the metaphorization of such excesses came to be marked by a term still in use when they want to express that someone or something exceeds all expectations: they say something "*está bien masacre*" or "*muy masacre*." A guy can be "*muy masacre*" because he drinks too much, is very aggressive or swears in excess; an object such as a motorcycle can be "*bien masacre*" because it is big, noisy or flashy. The insertion of this term in youth slang is part of the symbolic re-elaboration of death in everyday life of the Ladinos of the capital city, who although familiar with political repression, did not have to suffer, as many of the indigenous did, the direct brutality of genocide.

Accustomization to death is reflected in the language of everyday speech, in alcoholism levels and in the strict observance of religious ceremonies. Although among the

working-class ladino population the prayers for protection from natural disasters go through the sieve of Christianity, cosmic fear in this context is an intercultural manifestation in which human perception of the divine and of the forces of the invisible unite Mayan and Ladinos alike in the same geography. Perhaps it is too soon to make such an assertion, but it seems that the common experience of being constantly choked by violence and poverty has propitiated forms of socialization between indigenous and Ladino residents that favor the construction of new ways of perception in neighborhoods such as Rafael Arévalo.

### **Religion and post-traumatic solidarities**

Although the mobilizing power of the Vatican and the figure of the Pope are still strong, people's opinions about priests are more pragmatic than before—for example, a priest's talent for communication is valued above his supposed sanctity. Both in Catholic and Evangelical churches, the psychosocial and spiritual explanation of life's problems is more appreciated than the opulence of the ritual apparatus. In contrast to previous decades, religious training that happens outside the church has become more important. Practices such as reading the Bible, constantly quoting from it, healing by prayer, and the intensive use of singing and clapping during ceremonies, which before were evidence enough to be stigmatized as Evangelical, have been adopted by Catholics across neighborhoods. Both Catholic and Evangelical churchgoers, whether Ladino or indigenous, are concerned with strengthening emotional interpersonal bonds in their congregations, particularly because all of them live under great economic pressure and lack institutional safety nets against State violence and common crime. This favors the reproduction of a social-relationship ethic of everyday life based on a religious faith that is constantly reinvigorated by the celebration and practice of rituals.

There are churches in which indigenous and Ladino circles gather together periodically to plan outreach activities, celebrations, and exchange information about critical cases in the families of the congregation, such as the relative who has alcohol or drug-dependency problems, the under-age girl who ran away from home because she got pregnant, or the person who is looking for work and not finding it. There, among the prayers, spontaneous acts of contrition or the offering of personal sacrifices in exchange for, for example, a relative giving up alcohol, are frequent occurrences, even though the relative in question will take to drinking again after a few months and the family and congregation will have to renew their efforts and begin the cycle over.

At the local church, a woman praises the congregation's priest: "even though he looks so indigenous, he speaks so well, and you should see how much people like him." Although racist attitudes persist, on special days mass begins with two ladino men walking into the church playing flutes and drums as Mayan musicians do in the old churchyards or at the head of processions on the streets of their towns. The women of the choir are dressed in *huipiles* and skirts made with streaked fabric from the Kekchí area, while the organist and his assistant cover their heads with a red *paliacate* kerchief and wear woolen shirts such as those used by the *cakchiqueles* of the main towns of Sololá. The amount of incense and ritual smoke used in the processions inside the temple is greater than in previous years. It is almost as if Ladinos were competing with the Mayan ceremonies that are somewhat familiar thanks to the sporadic graphic coverage of these events by Prensa Libre, El Periódico or Siglo XXI.

The re-emerging of ceremonial practice as an intercultural experience has a therapeutic effect that alleviates the pain of tragedy and is leading the way to new



formulations of the understanding and practice of religion among some residents. Although in historical terms it might still be too early to consider this a phenomenon of national relevance, given the currency of cultural discrimination and racism, some ladinos feel attracted to Mayan religiosity, and their curiosity is translating into a greater respect if not a more profound identification with intercultural sacredness, which is useful in the strengthening of the individual and collective subjectivity, so hurt and wounded by violence.

### **Working-class Ladino racism and “ethnic fears”**

In order to understand what Ladinos of Rafael Arévalo think of the indigenous it is important to know how they identify and think about themselves. Many call themselves “Guatemaltecos,” “capitalinos” (from the capital city) or refer to themselves by the name of the *departamento* where they were born. Referring to themselves as Ladinos usually comes up only after asking if they have any indigenous ancestors or relations. The usual answer is that “all Ladinos have some indigenous ancestors” or “almost all Guatemalans have indigenous blood.” However, this remark is often followed by the emphatic observation that on this or that branch of the family, there are Spanish or some other European ancestors who had blond hair, light-colored eyes, were taller than normal or had lots of money.

In general, there is among popular Ladinos a contradictory combination of cultural markers that serve to self-define them as non-indigenous, and other markers which define them as Ladinos. In the first case, being non-indigenous is defined by the denial of the characteristics that, according to the ladino imaginary, are part of indigenous identity, and

which often serve to stigmatize rural and uneducated people. Thus, non-indigenous is, among other things, not wearing *traje* or *corte*, not speaking a Mayan language, not using *caites*, and not having a Mayan surname. Ladino, in the positive self-definition, means speaking Spanish, listening to marimba music, speaking in the *vos* form, and dressing in European style. Rarely does the person who self-identifies as Ladino use the word *mestizo* or *mestizaje* to refer to Ladino culture, and if they do, it almost never shows a pride in Mayan heritage.

In the Ladino homes of the Rafael Arévalo neighborhood, as in many other popular ladino homes, the members of the family are often called by nicknames that allude—sometimes aggressively, but more often affectionately—to physical appearance. It is not unusual that people call their children, friends or relations not by their given names, but as Negro, Chino, Canche, Flaco, Gordo, Sapo or Colocho, to mention some examples. This is an oblique reflection of how hegemonic perceptions about race and culture influence interpersonal relationships in everyday life. To understand why city Ladinos look down on indigenous people and deny their own mixed blood it is helpful to consider other factors, such as the way in which geographical migrations and information received at school and through the media have shaped their perceptions about racial and cultural diversity in their country and abroad.

It is interesting, for example, that among the residents of the Rafael Arévalo, whether Ladino or indigenous, when someone is said to be foreign it is immediately assumed that the person is from a northern or Anglo-Saxon country, and deserves to be treated with deference and even admiration. In contrast, other foreign persons, especially if they are dark-skinned citizens from a Central American country, are treated coldly; or if

they belong to the working-classes, it is automatically assumed that they are untrustworthy and probably criminal. This vision of the world does not preclude a certain curiosity along with the prejudice to find out who these outsiders and non-Guatemalans are and what is their way of thinking, a curiosity fed by the scarce travel experience of most people, excepting those who have migrated to Mexico, the United States and Canada.

The travel factor influences the representations that define the foreign Anglo-Saxon, Latin-Mediterranean, Latin American Mestizo, Asian or Afro, but its main effect is on the understanding of cultural diversity inside Guatemala itself. The lower-class Ladinos in the Rafael Arévalo travel very little, and to a great extent this is related to their poverty, prejudice and lack of information. The geographical mobility of most residents, with the exception of those who came from the provinces and just recently settled in the neighborhood, is very limited. Most of them, have been very seldom if at all to Antigua Guatemala. Most of them have never been to Chichicastenango, Panajachel, Quetzaltenango or Cobán, and only a few who work in the government or in big private companies have visited Puerto Barrios, Livingston, Río Dulce or Tikal. This affects their perception of the indigenous, Asian and Afro-Guatemalan population, and their understanding of the Mayan cultural universe.

The spaces where personal interaction between indigenous persons and Ladinos is more intense, often in an unbalanced form to the detriment of the former, is still the canton marketplaces of neighboring districts, the markets of San Judas and El Guarda, as well as La Terminal, where many people in the food and restaurant business buy their supplies. It should be considered that, in spite of the persistent racism, class positions sometimes color the opinion of working-class Ladinos about Mayan culture and the consequences of the

Mayan movement. Take the following instance. On New Year's Eve 1997, with the memory of the peace agreements still fresh, as we were celebrating around a bonfire on a street of the Rafael Arévalo district, I asked Bersaín Mejía if he thought there was going to be an indigenous uprising against Ladinos in Guatemala. Without giving it much thought, he replied: "I wish the fucking Indians would rise up, maybe that way all this shit would change." Bersaín's answer made me think that perhaps, many working-class Ladino do not share the fear of the growing Mayan movement, as some columnists propagandize in the cities newspapers.<sup>262</sup> Long years of violence and extreme poverty generated new attitudes among working-class Ladinos that have some expectations about the prospect of the indigenous majority becoming the key factor that would push for social reform and democratization in Guatemala.

In Bersaín's voiced opinion there is an implicit appreciation of the sheer numeric and organizing force of the indigenous population, which in times past served to mobilize Ladino fears and authoritarianism. Fear of the size of the indigenous population and its organizing potential was an important element in the downfall of the government of Jacobo Arbenz (Handy 1989), and a similar fear led the army to the strategic decision of carrying out the genocide with which the possibilities for an insurgent victory faded in the mid 1980's. In the months after the New Year's bonfire in the Rafael Arévalo, the subject of ethnic war and Ladino fear took on an important place in the conversations with Bersaín,

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<sup>262</sup> The columnist who has in recent years been one of the most dedicated defendants of Ladinos from the perceived indigenous threat is Mario Roberto Morales, from the Siglo XXI newspaper. For a critique of Morales' opinions, see Adams 1999 and Hale 1999. In relation to the history of the Mayan movement, as well as the abundant documents generated by their organizations and leaders, see the newspaper articles by Víctor Montejo, Estuardo Zapeta, the book by Kay Warren (1999) and the articles by Demetrio Cojtí, "The Politics of Maya Reivindicación"; Demetrio Rodríguez Guaján, "Maya Culture and the Politics of Development"; Luis Enrique Sam Colop, "The Discourse of Concealment and 1992" and by Irma Otzoy, "Maya Clothing and Identity," published in the volume edited by Edward F. Fischer and R. McKenna Brown (1996)

Rorcael and their friends. In Rorcael's perspective, what needs to happen is a "co-habitation" of all indigenous, Ladino and Creole peoples, rather than an indigenous anti-Ladino uprising. Without that, he says, "nothing will change." And, he adds, "the problem of Ladino fear is reduced to a minority who have not really approached culture, education or history." These people, "who can't even begin to see the strategies," are the inhabitants of the settlements in the capital city, the "*mucos*," as a middle-class or elite Guatemalan would call them, are identified as the main obstacle to intercultural political mobilization, since they are only concerned about their own survival. "I will give you an example" says Rorcael:

The other day I was talking to Freddy, and he says 'Now we really are going to be fucked, man.' And so I ask him why, and he says 'What do you think is going to happen to us when all those Indians get to Congress, or if, still worse, they get to power?' And I replied 'What's wrong with you? Maybe you don't feel so sure of what you are, of what you want, of what you have, of what you want to have. You think a bunch of indigenous people are gonna oppress you?' 'You think that they might even with violence displace you and suddenly education, culture and history are going to change?' 'I don't think so,' I said. 'That would be a long process and many years would have to pass. And they won't be alone in power, they would have to form coalitions, no one can displace indigenous peoples, or ladinos, or *criollos*; they all have to live together, if not, nothing will ever change.'

Rorcael says "Ladino fear, I can tell you, comes from those people who haven't cared to learn about culture, education, and history, as I say, people who can't even begin to imagine the strategies. Let's say there are, as they say, 250 settlements around the capital. The people who live under such poverty, without urbanization, healthcare, education or money, those people, how can they be concerned with those issues?." The problem, then, thinks Rorcael, is not people like Freddy, who have some education and aspire to a middle class who feels threatened by the indigenous rise to power, but the more than 1.5 million

people, who, according to him, live in the settlements and exclude themselves from political processes.

Along similar thematic lines, when on another occasion we discussed the 1992 Nobel Peace prize awarded to Rigoberta Menchú Tum and the impact that this news had in the neighborhood, Rorcael commented that before Rigoberta's public appearance, "there was some affliction because historically, indigenous peoples had never had a representative who could speak for them. Indigenous people had never sat on a negotiation table to speak for their needs, their problems and their situation." "But even today," he says, speaking about another neighbor friend, "there are people here who think radically, let me give you an example:

Sunday I was speaking with Maco and he says 'Have you read what the newspaper says about that Rigoberta Menchú?' No, I say. I got the paper but I haven't read it yet. 'Ah,' he says. 'There is this woman who claims some of what Rigoberta says about her story is not true, is made up.' We could say that Maco is in this aspect a racist," says Rorcael, "because he would like it if it turned out that what the paper says is true, because Rigoberta has a certain image at an international level, and he would like all that effort to be undone.

When I ask Rorcael to explain why he thinks Maco is a racist, Bersaín bursts in without warning: "I tell you, there at the diner on the corner are three indigenous women who aren't how they used to be. Once I asked them if they were refugees and I don't think they told the truth. But like I say, these women don't come across the way they did before, when the man could fool them like children." "The man" is assumed to mean any Ladino man like many in the Rafael Arévalo who have been used for decades to look down on indigenous people.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> A careful examination of gender relationships in relation to violence, racism and identity processes can be seen in the works of Kay Warren (2000), Diane Nelson (1999) and in Carol A. Smith (1996).

After Bersaín's interruption about the case of the three women who are no longer fooled by "a man," Rorcael, without alluding to Maco, carries on:

I think racism is expressed in that capitalism is a success system, but it is about economic success, and those who have power to get materially close to where the money is are very few. And the more dough people have the more racist they are, because the difference between them and those who have nothing is more noticeable.

Maco, according to Rorcael, identifies with "the system," and that makes him take a stance against the indigenous movement and Rigoberta Menchú. We should consider here that Maco is the owner of a small pharmacy, and that Rorcael never misses a chance to state his anticapitalist heterodoxy. However, as would become plain in a different occasion, Maco feels great pride in his small collection of prehispanic figurines, which he gathered when he was growing up in the Rafael Arévalo neighborhood, and in his pride for archeological Mayas he coincides with Rorcael.

The contrasts in this debate among lower-class ladinos—racism, ladino fear, the rejection of Rigoberta, and the curiosity for ancient Mayan culture—is a variant of the contradiction that exists in the elite's discourse that glorifies the monumental past of the Mayas while at the same time discriminates and denigrates their contemporary descendants. For at least a century, the school system and the media in Guatemala have reproduced this contradiction of a cult to dead Mayas and the vilification of the live "Indians," a contradiction which contains cracks and ambiguities which are key elements in the history of interethnic relations and the construction of more democratic intercultural relations in the new generations. In this respect, it is interesting to point out the reactions in the Rafael Arévalo to the announcement of the referendum on the issue of the incorporation of Mayan cultural rights in the Constitution of Guatemala. Some ladino housewives who did not

participate in the referendum think that indigenous people will “sooner or later” get the constitutional recognition they seek because they are persistent and because “they organize better than Ladinos.” In the same vein, and regarding the rumors instigated by conservative associations, which are against the reforms, I asked a group of young people in the neighborhood if they thought it was true that the Maya movement was going to negotiate the evacuation of homeowners who built their homes around the site of Kaminal Juyú, as some movements such as Pro-Patria, headed by the ex-presidential candidate Julio Bianchi, had said. Everyone replied that they did not think such a thing would happen, and laughed at the gullibility of the Ladinos who could believe such things.

For the Ladinos in the neighborhood, economic needs and street safety are such urgent issues that the possibility of an ethnic conflict of national dimensions is less of a concern than it is for foreign anthropologists and intellectuals of the middle and upper classes of the urban centers. In the Rafael Arévalo, Rorcael thinks that Guatemala could hardly be the stage of such ethnic conflicts as those of Yugoslavia, since Guatemala is so close to the United States and “they wouldn’t allow a movement of such nature.” The demographic proportion of the indigenous population in the Rafael Arévalo neighborhood is probably not large enough to help us discern what could be the future scenes of ethnic and social conflict at a national level.<sup>264</sup> Nevertheless, the words of Bersaín at the New Year’s Eve bonfire, Rorcael’s opinions, and the local debates around racism and ethnic fear give some basis for optimism in imagining what the future of intercultural relations between working-class Ladinos and Mayas might be. The effects of political exclusion and

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<sup>264</sup> According to the *Atlas Conozca Guatemala* published by the National Statistics Institute, (23/02/2000), the Rafael Arévalo district is inhabited by 902 indigenous and 10,138 non-indigenous people. I am grateful to Rafael Herrarte from the Municipalidad de la ciudad de Guatemala for this information.



poverty are so profound that hearing some other residents talk about violence and social injustice, one could think that what is about to happen in Guatemala is not remotely to do with ethnic war, but is rather more akin to a rebellion of servants against their unfeeling masters.

### **New and old anti-values**

As a result of living constantly under extreme conditions, the Ladinos of the Rafael Arévalo have a repertoire of values that oppose those of mainstream society. These antivalues are the key for the rebuilding of interpersonal solidarity in the new postwar stage. Lack of money shaped lifestyles that favor using every resource at hand, as well as the cultivation of friendship and sociability. The daily life of most indigenous or Ladino residents is characterized by extreme austerity in the consumption of water and electricity, and in the use of the telephone, clothes, shoes, and every object that is part of a person's attire. This austerity is accompanied by the practice of recycling or hoarding of any artifact or material, whether plastic, wood or metal, that might be reused in the home.

In this neighborhood, as in others of the capital city, there is no supermarket "culture." The habit of buying the supplies and groceries for the whole week or month does not exist. This has to do with the limited availability of cash, and with the fact that, for many housewives, going to the market every day is a special opportunity to leave the house, say hello to friends, ask about others, exchange news and give each other some form of support to go on with their daily activities. In an environment polluted by a nearby garbage dump that for decades has affected the health of the population, where there are no

sports centers, libraries or other spaces of leisure, people spend their free time attending church services, visiting relatives and—men in particular—drinking something like three to five beers on a weekend, at least once a month.

Rorcael, after stating that “here we lack so much that petty criminals have to work very hard,” goes on to make a quick listing—with the authority he has as a car mechanic—of the makes of car that are thieves’ favorites, and then to criticize the consumerism and social climbing of those who, being part of the working classes in the neighborhood, aspire to reach the middle class. “Man needed to feed himself, needed a blanket to keep warm, needed to make more money because he had more needs, and that is how he became a consumerist, but that was a fair, rational consumerism,” says Rorcael. “But when did man start being such a morbid consumer, such an alienated buyer?” he asks himself, and adds:

Marxism says that one can live fine with two pairs of shoes a year, and I think that is perfectly possible. But, how is it that we have been fetishized to have six pairs of shoes? There are people with closets full of clothes they will never wear. One becomes superfluous. They say Japan is one of the places where more things are invented, but 75% of those inventions are superfluous, things that aren’t going to be useful.

Spurred by the warm reception his comments against consumerism elicit—consumerism being one of his favorite subjects, and one that frequently appears in the repertoire of antivalues of other residents who are not in Rorcael’s social circle— Rorcael goes on to say that:

Developed countries have an interest in our Latin American countries being full of ladinos and indigenous peoples. Why? Because they are consumers, and the more people there are, the more products they sell, the more they sell, the more money they have, and the more money they have, the more power, and the more power they have, the more they fuck up society.

## Son Music and Ballet

On a certain day when Bersaín and Rorcael, in their usual excited way, had their audience entranced with a non-stop, linked series of thoughts about “the real purpose of politics,” and “the real objective of work,” the conversation wandered to stories about the history of the neighborhood and, after picking up for a short interlude a passage from *The Russians Wagon* by Bernard Shaw, which Rorcael likes a lot, conversation turned to another episode of intellectual debate in the past, which is relevant for the objectives of this chapter.

Once Pusho and Freddy were here, and Pusho started saying that you can’t compare ballet with national Son music. And, what did I say to Pusho? I said, ‘Look here Pusho, you should not value things in such an extravagant way, you should try to look at them from a historical point of view, because if it is historical, it is part of you. In a traditional sense, because Son is Guatemalan and so are you, it is in your nature to like Son.

Bersaín interrupted to say: “I hear marimba music every day. Sometimes at six in the morning.” Rorcael continues: “Well, with this thing about Son and ballet, we were speaking of aesthetic, historical questions.” Bersaín again: “It would all depend on the indigenous ballet. And from there? Haven’t you seen the Paabanc, then? It’s so nice to see them dance. We are speaking of dance, of how they move, so nice, the music, when they sound those sea shells, like conchs, aaahaaa... and your hair stands on end, you know, that’s what it does to me, it makes my hair stand on end.” When Rorcael tries to start again with his talk on indigenous Son and ballet and have another go at Pusho and Freddy, the “*mara* that does nothing but drink instead of developing their humanity,” Bersaín closes the subject, almost shouting: “Aaahaaa... lets talk about processions then. Aren’t they nice?. I

was there once when they were making a carpet of eggshells in front of the Palacio. What a beauty. I wondered where they got so many eggshells. It was fucking excellent.”

## **Conclusions**

The Rafael Arévalo neighborhood is exceptional in that it was built on the surface of what once was the Maya city of Kaminal Juyú, which if it hadn't been destroyed would be an important part of Guatemalan national heritage. However, in a city where there exist no development programs to resolve the housing needs of the poorest, part of the archeological heritage of Kaminal Juyú was recycled in the form of bricks and adobes made by the indigenous, and finally served to build new houses in Zone 7. This feature in the history of the neighborhood still has something of a hold on the admiration of the ladino population for the archeological Mayas, but not enough to erase the racist prejudices against the Maya residents with whom they share the same urban space. The Ladinos of the Rafael Arévalo define themselves negatively, on one hand, regarding indigenous people and their own mixed blood, and positively, on the other, valuing what they consider ladino traditions such as speaking Spanish, using the *vos* form in speech, listening to marimba music and having the dietary and religious habits that have been re-appropriated selectively by the elite. This definition of themselves and their perception of cultural diversity inside and outside Guatemala is greatly influenced by their limited travel and their lack of historical markers to situate their own identity. As I argue throughout this chapter, to better understand the phenomenon of racism and interethnic relationships in the Rafael Arévalo area and in the nation at large, we must examine the history of conflicts between indigenous peoples and Ladinos within a larger field of hegemonic representations, which include the exaltation and denigration of other races, cultures and nationalities. The reverence in which

the values and hegemonic representations of white supremacy are held is deeply rooted among Ladinos, and is expressed not only in anti-indigenous feelings, but also in the vilification of all non-white peoples. The influence of ideologies of racial and cultural superiority and inferiority is present in all the spaces of everyday and family life. The strength of this influence owes much, on the one hand, to cultural imperialism deriving from a plantation economy that promoted the admiration of European and North American peoples, cultures and goods, and, on the other, to the constant repetition of the dictate that forced labor is the best way to civilize peoples who tend naturally toward laziness and vagrancy due to their racial and cultural inferiority. The internalization of these values, as has been observed in other societies of the continent, sometimes acquires comic features that are part of the more or less grotesque or violent popular recreation of the dominant mentality.

Working class Ladinos share the elite's representations of indigenous peoples, but also have other perspectives derived from their condition as dominated sectors. For example, they are more concerned about their own immediate material survival and are less apprehensive about the changes that may come when the indigenous population acquires more participation space in the strategic decisions of the state and the economy. Although the racism of the ladino residents in the Rafael Arévalo neighborhood towards the Mayan population has been a visible element of interethnic relationships, new spaces of sociability and interaction have emerged, particularly in churches, in regard to their position before the State and in everyday survival. Religion, for many residents, is the safest way to form a new ethic of interpersonal relationships which might repair the ruptures in subjectivity inflicted by racism, violence and poverty. Indigenous people and Ladinos share the fear of

expressing publicly their political opinions, are skeptic of political parties and have an image of the State as a force from which damage and very little benefit can be expected. Both also participate in the ideology that criminalizes poverty by explaining the source of criminal behavior in the proliferation of vagrants; they have internalized the hegemonic representations that portray Guatemalans as a lazy people who will never achieve the level of economic development of Europe, Japan, or the United States.

Other shared aspects of the interethnic relationship are the political culture which includes the political need for a dictatorship, getting used to death, cosmic fear and the use of swearing and “malas palabras.” This neighborhood is a microcosm in which the consequences of the 1954 interruption of the modernizing project—as well as the psycho-social impact of the long war which followed eight years later—can be observed. As a consequence of the limited opportunities of social mobility, of the lack of wage regulation and an internal market aimed at meeting the basic needs of people, the population developed a repertoire of anti-values and practices which constitute an active critique of consumer society. The process of social atomization brought by the institutionalization of terror has been partially reverted by the cultivation of sociability, the pleasure in sharing the spoken word, the social authorship of critical thought and the will for anonymity in carrying out works for the common good.

The identity of working-class Ladinos is, in many aspects, a product of the combination of relations of oppression whose origin goes back to colonial times and the ethnic labels created by the labor discipline of export agriculture. In the elite’s representations, working-class Ladinos, together with indigenous peoples and Ladino-like Indians are the “*shumos*,” forming the masses of people considered racially and culturally

inferior to whites, *criollos* and Ladinos who think of themselves as white. Considering the great weight that servile relationships have in Guatemala, it is not surprising that, along with anti-Mayan racism, there has appeared in recent years a stronger anti-*shumo* and anti-*cholero* sentiment. In the elite's discourse, *shumos* and *choleros* include not only indigenous peoples, but ladino-like Indians and working-class Ladinos as those from the Rafael Arevalo who in their cultural repertoire personify all the attributes opposed to the values of the white supremacy. The term "*shumo*" has gone from being an insult equivalent to "Indian" to refer to the great majority of poor, dark-skinned people who, after the war and the signing of the peace agreements, would be anxious to overflow the old parameters of oligarchic authoritarianism that for so many decades has benefited the sectors of the population linked to export agriculture and organized crime. From the point of view of the cultural constructs produced by the elite and the upper and middle classes, *shumos* are not only *mareros*, ladino-like Indians and working-class Ladinos, but all those who, going back to their colonial ancestors, are identifiable as *hijos de la gran puta*.

## Chapter V

### Cosmic fear, grotesqueness and memory of dispossession among Guatemalan *hijos de la gran puta*

“Ese cerote es una mierda”.

Escuchado en una cafetería “de chinos” en la ciudad de Guatemala, marzo del 2002.

The social and individual interactions between *gente decente* and *gente corriente* in Guatemala are part of the everyday reproduction of a socio-racial hierarchy regulated by norms and prejudices that are more or less explicit and violent. That violence is one of the most brutal aspects of the relations of servitude that characterize the country's socio-cultural modernity and the interplay of Guatemalan identities that can hardly be explained by the conventional Indian-Ladino dichotomy<sup>265</sup>. For example, the history of *choleros* and *hijos de la gran puta* is part of the subjectivity constructed around the symbolic power of Whiteness and within the socio-racial hierarchy that for more than five centuries has denigrated indigenous people and bastardized most of the mestizo majority. Very frequently, *choleros* are treated as *hijos de la gran puta* and *hijos de la gran puta* in their own way, share a common memory of dispossession, that is part of the hypothetical mestizo self, usually expressed among other things, through the daily use of *malas palabras*. In this chapter, I explore some cultural features of the Guatemalan *chusma*, the *shumada*, the *cholerada*, the rabble, the scum, lower-class people which make up the *hijos de la gran puta*. They are the non-exotic anti-citizens, who have fallen into invisibility

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<sup>265</sup>In another case, during a conversation about the dilemmas of Guatemalan society, a landowner woman in her sixties praised the hardworking virtues of her Indian employees and suddenly switched gears and bitterly shouted: “pero con respecto a esa gentuza, esos *choleros* que viven por El Gallito en la zona 3, si alguien les tirara una bomba atómica nadie diría nada y todos estaríamos felices”. (C.M. Guatemala City, February 13, 2003)



between the “pure Indians” and the middle and upper class Ladinos. I develop a phenomenological portrait of popular Ladinos as non-White mestizos, exploring the symbolic features that makes them *hijos de la gran puta* compared to the Mexican *hijos de la chingada*, like their memory of dispossession and the verbal art of *malas palabras*; an art that constitutes a space of identity reproduction grounded in Rabelaisian repertoires that reunite the ancient and the classical body through “grotesqueness” and “cosmic fear”.

### **Fear and *malas palabras***

The cultural and social reproduction of *hijos de la gran puta* reveals crucial aspects of the Ladino self and the grief provoked by the conscious denial or the shameful acceptance of his/her half-breed-Indian condition. From the point of view of the cultural constructs sprung out of the colonial order, the *hijos de la gran puta* are the popular Ladinos but also the *indios aladinados* or *ladinizados*, who symbolically have internalized the rejection of the indigenous primal mother and express their crossbreed and memory of dispossession through the use of insults and *malas palabras*. The radical refusal of the half-breed-Indian or mestizo indígena as the central axis for an institutional development of a national Guatemalan culture set the State against the non-citizen represented by Indians and *hijos de la gran puta*. This led to a further barbarization of the *hijos de la gran puta* and anchored violence as a steady presence in social and interpersonal relationships. The symbolic violence of the *hijos de la gran puta* particularly that of the *malas palabras*, is aimed at gaining some emotional gratification that can temporarily ease the identity anxiety that is triggered by the memory of dispossession, mainly among men.

In a world torn between despair and extreme poverty, *malas palabras* have a festive effect over fear, in particular, with the support of alcohol or one of its substitutes. Very

often, the fear of the pervasiveness of death is ameliorated by *malas palabras* that transform the chances of dying into symbolical suicide or renascence. Fear and *malas palabras* are part of a cultural repertoire that has been transmitted through generations and that contains unwritten guidelines to survive difficult situations according to age, gender, ethnicity, social class, or religious beliefs.

Among the different fears that have afflicted the national self, the fear of being killed after expressing publicly your political beliefs has been one of the main characteristics of the way Guatemalan citizens have approached organized participation and politics during modern times. Through decades, fear has prevailed in Guatemala, a feeling that is elsewhere called terror. It has become sort of a daily discipline, almost a religion with its rituals and sayings. It all begins with "encomendarse uno a Dios a toda hora y en todo lugar" (commending oneself to God, everywhere and any time), as doña Josefina Castro says in the barrio de San Sebastián. If you're a Catholic, it includes making the sign of the cross over and over, even if you are inside your own house.

Once this is accomplished, you should never walk the streets late at night, and if you have a car, avoid driving alone. In the recent past, was important not carry an address book with your friends' phone numbers or addresses; much less carry books or any printed material that could give the impression that you are an enemy of the government. Always you had to carry your identity card and never talk about politics in public places, on the telephone or make such comments in personal mail.

Concerning delinquency, avoid using clothes, shoes, jewelry or gadgets that could interest hoodlums, especially if you are on foot. You should also keep informed about the geography of crime. Nevertheless, when walking around Guatemala City it is always important to bring some money along with you because if you don't the *largos* (crooks)

could *malencabronarse* (get angry) and *puyar* you, to give you a *buena morongueada o de repente que te den agua* for not having anything of value on that is worth their while.

The central role played by violence amidst Guatemalan *hijos de la gran puta* evolved from an inside war up to a social crises where the poor assault the poor on a daily basis. It manifests itself as well in the different expressions that describe the fact of being killed. Violent death —mainly expressed in a masculine voice— acquires a metaphoric value through different images: “riddled with bullets”, “gunned down”, or “stabbed”. In popular slang, *caló* or *caliche*: “*lo pusieron a descansar*” (he was put to rest); “*Se lo palmaron*” (“palmed”), *le dieron agua* (“given water”), *se lo tostaron* (“toasted”), *le dieron chicharrón*, *le dieron aguarrás* (“given turmoil”), *lo plomearon* (“leaded”), *le pusieron*, *estiró los tenis* (“stretched his tennis shoes”), *estiró los hules* (“stretched his rubbers”), *estiró los caites* (“stretched his sandals”), *entregó el equipo* (“gave back his equipment”), *se lo quebraron* (“cracked”), *se lo tronaron* (“blown away”), *le dieron crank* (“cranked”), *le dieron pañoza*, *le dieron pan* (“given bread”), *se lo doblaron* (“bent”), *se lo enfriaron* (“chilled”) or else *allí la fue a tener* (“there he had it”). In a more scatological approach: *Le quebraron el culo* (“they cracked his ass”), *lo agarraron cagando* (“he was caught shitting”), *lo hicieron mierda* (“he was turned into shit”), *le sacaron la mierda* (“they kicked the shit out of him”), *lo dejaron hecho mierda* (“he was left like shit”), or else *le reventaron el cutete* (“his ass was cracked or blasted”).

For a foreign observer, the lack of political correctness in these and other metaphors used in Guatemala could reflect a self-derogatory and macabre taste. Still, it illustrates a way of emotionally overcoming terror through grotesque humor. Death, alcohol and *malas palabras* have been present in the cultural and political history of the country. Even a national glory of world literature as Miguel Ángel Asturias, Nobel Prize of Literature 1967,

used to say: "En Guatemala solo se puede vivir a verga" (in Guatemala, you can only live drunk). Another well known writer, Marco Antonio Flores, best known as the *Bolo (Drunk) Flores*, who has made a cult out of the grotesque and the political novel, has restated Asturias' saying: "En este cerote pais todo mundo chupa como loco" (In this *cerote* country, everybody drinks like mad).

*Malas palabras* and alcohol create a festive atmosphere that defeats fear and consolidates links among friends, strangers and relatives in order to survive "*la situación*" and "*la violencia*". Under the generic label of *la situación*, Guatemalans encapsulate a native scrutiny of their own history and society, where often the main unspoken referential factor is *la violencia*. *La situación* and *la violencia* are many times exchangeable terms that evoke a gigantic shadow that is ubiquitous but silenced. *La situación* is like a Pandora's box, with a very unpleasant inventory of surprises and lessons. Under such conditions, Guatemalans say that *la situación está hecha mierda* or else, *la situación está de la gran puta*. *La situación* always implies different factors and variables that can unexpectedly push people beyond their limits, their fears and, as if it were "natural", test human endurance to all kinds of sacrifices and extreme situations.

The use of *malas palabras* consolidates friendships and boosts daily life, especially in the netherworld inhabited by the barbaric civil majority. *Malas palabras* are part of the daily interactions in popular eateries, *Chinese* cafeterias, small neighborhood shops, and small and medium size businesses of "informal economy" where the bulk of the urban society survives. *Malas palabras* are the *lingua franca* used in streets, schools, plantations, factories, barracks, prisons, markets, parks and in *camionetas*, an essential part of the public transportation system. In this sort of places, one can appreciate in all its ambiguity and multiplicity the silences, fractures and distortions of modern day capitalism in Guatemala.

Buses and *camionetas* are microcosms where one can observe the hierarchies of abuse, insults, racism, servile relationships, Whiteness, crime and other forms of material and symbolical violence that characterize the national self.

### ***La camioneta***

Towards the end of December 1996, in the wake of the peace agreement signing, I was waiting for a *camioneta* at the market in *La Mesilla* border town, while heading to Guatemala City. I overheard a shoe shop owner yelling at his young employee: *limpiá esa mierda vos cerote*. (Clean that shit you piece of shit). The young man had spilled a bottle of soda on the floor. Being Guatemalan myself, I did not find it peculiar to hear such an expression. Still I was left thinking about the twofold scatological sentence, and about the important place of excrescencies in the art of insulting and in the world of the grotesque in Guatemala. I left that place and got on the *camioneta* with the echoes of the sentence reminding me of old, unsolved questions about the national self and the identities of the barefoot rabble of Central America. After a while, the interactions inside the *camioneta* sent me back to the pre-feudal society and the broken promises of liberal democracy in Guatemala. The set of interactions that took place between the driver, his helper, national and foreign passengers, the peddlers in the street, cops and army personnel, show the dynamic power and symbolic energy of insults and *malas palabras* in oral and body language. For any foreigner from the United States or Europe, buses are a living museum where modern day incongruities seem to dissolve peacefully through cultural relativist's eye, bringing together the post-industrial being with the "simple folks". Nonetheless, at the other extreme, for national passengers, poor Indians or Ladinos, the *camioneta* is just another well-known space for "gente corriente", condemned to ride jumbled like animals

towards the slaughterhouse or like forced farm workers towards the plantation.

There aren't enough *camionetas*, especially at rush hour, so everyone grudgingly accepts riding cramped together and exposed to disaster. On buses that drive out of Guatemala City, particularly on rural market days, you can always find someone who is enebriated, or needs to urinate or perhaps, even vomit, as a result of the winding road that the driver has rushed through over the speed limit. Most buses are in bad mechanical condition and police don't take notice of overloaded units. So is not uncommon for buses to crash, fall over cliffs or sink in rivers, passengers and all. The seats that are immediately behind the driver are reserved for Ladino women, favored by the wish of the driver's helper to kindle himself with their presence, or even better, their conversation. The helper is in charge of shoving and sitting passengers, usually poor Ladino and indigenous people. The driver and the helper are mostly Ladino, though in some lines there are some more or less *indios aladinados*. Helpers are known by being abusing passengers, stacking them on top of each other and overcharging or casually "forgetting" to return the change when someone pays with a large bill. In the overcrowded *camioneta* you can find pregnant or child-bearing women with a baby strapped at their backs. Small children sometimes sleep while standing, not asking why their families can't pay the price for them to ride sitting. Also elders that have a hard time finding a place to hold onto, while the driver is driving at full speed, steering through roads that run through the mountains.

For middle and upper class Guatemalans, it is humiliating to travel in a *camioneta*. As a young Ladino who had just bought a car working as a bank teller in Huehuetenango's cabecera departamental told me, "you ride always squished, smelling Indian farts... and, if you're lucky enough to ride seated, chances are you have the butt of an old lady stuck in your face all the way". Wealthy Guatemalans can't stand the smell of urine, sweat,

fireplace smoke, dirty clothes, sandals, wool, baskets, *chompipes*, cats, dogs, vegetables and *tamales* that the people carries along. Passengers dress in rags as well as in beautiful hand-made clothing, either new or with shirts and pants that have been repeatedly mended. Children and adults seem run down by malnutrition, gastroenteritis or tuberculosis, their faces stained, their bellies swollen and barefooted. In one hand a younger sibling, in the other a bag, a *machete*, a purse or a basket. And to make things worse, the helper shoves his way up and down the aisle in order to collect the fare, giving no heed to passengers' nudging and jabbing or their compliance to more over so the man can do his job. When everyone is convinced that there is no place for someone else, the helper, standing on the tip of his feet, in one hand holding the money, and in the other holding the tickets, asks those standing to move further back. This is done using verbal formulas that synthesize unwritten rules that exemplify each one's place in Guatemalan society. Body and oral language exchange during a trip goes as follows:

— “*Vos colochó, hacete la campaña, correte por favor*”. The helper raises his arm while waiving his hand as if pushing people back. He looks at those standing straight in the eye, especially the *colochó*, (curly haired) a young man in his early twenties who accepts the formal address *vos* —even though the helper is older than him— and the easygoing *colochó*, a fatherly name if compared with *espinudo*, more akin to calling him an *Indio*. The helper also “acts” politely when saying please.

— “*El señor de la camisa blanca, por favor muévase papá*”. The helper also addresses the passenger formally, but only to latter mockingly pay his respects by calling him “daddy”. It's the twofold game of a boy asking something to his father and of a father ordering his son.

— “*María no jodás correte, si no te voy a bajar con todo y tus tanates*”. The helper

pushes the line of standing passengers with his body in order to get closer to an indigenous woman, making her believe that he might even keep his word. The sequence evolves to *vos*, the address that *Ladino* racism has adopted for Indians. He also calls her *María*, a way of addressing all indigenous women, scorning her real name. The use of a straight offense as “*no jodás*” makes several passengers uneasy while the aforementioned moves an inch.

Pressure grows as the helper aims at a foreigner:

— “Mister, *plis, muévase porque allá atrasito hay lugar*”. Passengers laugh at the helper’s baldness to speak in “English”. In his turn, in order to recover control, he puts aside personal demands and bursts in outrage:

— “*A la gran puta muchá ya les dije... no sean tan pura mierda... córranse un poquito que todavía hay lugar allí*”. The verbal exchange reaches its climax. Some adult *Ladino* women in particular, reprehend his attitude:

— Ssshhhhssshhssssshhhh.

— In a low voice, one passenger says to another: “Y ese cerote que se cree?” (Who does this *cerote* think he is?) Many eyes are set on the helper, but others are paying no attention. Most of the passengers have seen the same story played many times and they simply don’t care anymore. Nevertheless, an old lady confronts him:

— “Aquí venimos gente uste’ no animales” (There are people riding here, not animals!) The helper doesn’t give in to the claim. Instead he answers with a conceptual synthesis about the features of the free market system, customer service and how forced compliance unifies *gafos* (poor people) in Guatemala.

— “*Putá muchá si tienen pisto y si no les gusta esta camioneta, con mucho gusto aquí los bajo porque esta mierda es para gente pobre y aquí no estamos llevando a nadie a la fuerza*”. Using *malas palabras* as in *puta muchá* and *esta mierda*, the helper instantly



dissolves the kind of personalized treatment used in previous persuasive arguments in favor of moving to the rear, into a generalized threat of being dropped off, aware of the dangers that await those who get stranded on the road, exposed to assaults or aggressions while maybe waiting hours for the next bus, maybe having to search for a place to stay overnight before continuing the trip the next day.

Passengers start to feel at ease when the helper has charged everyone. Instead of returning through the aisle, he opens the back door and walks up to the roof, or sometimes he shows off his manly gymnastics and goes back by clinging on the right side's open windows of the moving vehicle. Then, with a quick twist of the waist, he reenters through the front door leaving the viewers marveling at his ability.

In view of the fact that the *camioneta* is always crowded, the driver can't see the rearview mirror and requires that the helper shout out when he can switch lanes, where to park or when to drive off. Helpers usually say *métala, métala*, which means that the driver can switch to the right lane. The sentence is clearly sexually oriented so many men celebrate it, while only a few women laugh discreetly. Most women make a gesture of disapproval, without forgetting to pray to God so that the bus won't crash and so that they will get home safely. In spite of the fact that the driver has his own portable altar with images of the Christ of *Esquipulas* or the *Chiantla* Virgin, the *Candelaria*, *Maximón*, *Hermano Pedro*, the Virgin of Mercy, or the Holy Child of *Atocha*, their presence doesn't hinder the flow of profane conversations about casual sexual encounters, booze or common friends, all seasoned with foul language, cursing and laughter. If there is a good understanding, then also a few punches or hair pulling, or simulated intentions of touching each other's butt or genitals. Helpers shout out the name of towns reached on the way, usually in its short form, pronounced in a voice that adds to it the helper's own personal

intonation and pitch. The whole trip is a circus where the forced promiscuity, the variety of odors, the delayed hunger and sphincter control, turn the end of the road into a feeling of relief, for which “por encima de todo agradecer a Dios por haber llegado sin novedad” (above all, one should thank God for arriving safely)”. Especially if you get off at *El Trébol*, or around 18<sup>th</sup> street, you should “pedirle nuevamente para no encontrarse con los ladrones” (pray again in order to avoid bumping into muggers).

### **Cosmic fear and grotesque laughter**

When the right to use *malas palabras* to offend or insult has become monopolized by the upper classes and its representatives, its exercise against all and everything as happens in Guatemala’s *camionetas*, becomes a powerful weapon of affirmative politics, culture and sexuality. With it, the *status quo* can be radically questioned as much as legitimized. Beyond mere vulgarity, “bad taste” or lack of education, dirty language and *malas palabras*, associated with the grotesque body, incorporate plenty of the social critique that has been absent from official history as much as from public and private education. Insults and *malas palabras* are the implicit under-text of social etiquette among social strata, genders, cultural groups, nationalities, age groups, and individuals in Guatemala. Out of these codes of behavior emerges a contradictory mixture of getting used to death, conservatism and openness to innovation, high levels of alcohol, an underground culture and a strict observance of religious practice. Both the daily life and the historical dimension of the popular Ladino-caste and of the Spanish-speaking Indians is characterized by this particular way of recapturing reality through the critical filter of popular language.

Since colonial times, low and middle-class indigenous people and mestizo Ladinos developed a particular idiosyncrasy that incongruously combines religious practice and

authoritarianism with a tendency to ridicule anything and anyone in a very Carnival-like way. *Malas palabras* and obscene disrespect are indeed practices that respond to the need to overcome daily frustrations. Although among low class Ladino population praying for protection from the forces of nature takes a Christian form, cosmic fear is an intercultural expression where human perceptions of the divinity and of occult forces of nature integrate both Ladinos and Mayas into the same landscape. Cosmological order was disciplined but not swallowed by modernity. Moreover, oral tradition and low self-esteem among the illiterate, push to widen the breach between official history and popular recollection. In such conditions cosmic fear and shared laughter dissolve historical borders between legal and illegal, providing a cathartic space that allows people to overcome the pain inflicted by daily interpersonal aggressions and institutionalized terror.

In a society domesticated by social and religious conservatism, the grotesque goes beyond the defiant obscenity of showing a gigantic phallus in public or the body of Christ covered by blood, sweat and tears. According to Bakhtin, grotesqueness grows from a primal fear of the cosmic world expressed in the four elements that constitute the basis of ancient knowledge: fire, water, earth and wind. Through these elements, the cosmic and the human worlds were connected. In order to overcome fear of the overwhelming forces of nature, ancient man exaggerates, satirizes and hyperbolizes these cosmic elements, overturning hierarchies like happens in a Carnival, and replacing the lower strata for the high. The body cavities and its secretions were concealed from the public sphere and only the lower classes dared to defy the morality, sanitary habits and hygiene that regulated the new body that would characterize the bourgeoisie. According to Bakhtin, the triumph of man over the elements eliminated the cosmic hierarchy. Nevertheless, though sanitized, the grotesque body prevailed within the moral and esthetic order of modern bourgeoisie

(Stallybrass and White 1986).

The grotesque body and the cosmic attributes of popular culture in Guatemala prevail side by side with the classical body and its closed crevices. The grotesque body transcends high and low culture's historicity and penetrates gender preference fissures. In Guatemala, grotesqueness' profound ambivalence is visible in two realms of cultural reproduction: political humor and popular religiousness. There might not be a better ethnographic opportunity to observe the presence of both realms in the grotesque body than the University of San Carlos' festival, called the *Huelga de Dolores* and the ample religious activities program that takes place at the Holy Week celebration. During both events, crowds gather searching for emotional and psychological relief from cosmic and political forces. Both milieus reverberate with the same urgency to dispose of daily life's anxieties through the intervention of cosmic elements and excrescencies.

The *Huelga de Dolores* is an invented tradition that has taken place with few exceptions ever since 1898. It begins the second Friday after Ash Wednesday and it stretches out through three weeks of harsh criticism against government actions, the oligarchy, the Army, the Catholic Church, the Protestant Church, and foreign interests. The festival includes publishing postcards and bulletins, and the singing of an anthem called *La Chalana*. There is also a single volume of the newspaper *No nos tientes*, that combines political review with insults and scorn, aimed against individuals and institutions, national and international, well known for their conservative agenda. *La Huelga* includes theater, comedy and musical plays, art exhibits, and the crowning of an Ugly King. The program ends with a big parade that moves along the main streets of Guatemala City on Viernes de Dolores, before Palm Sunday, and ends at the Central Plaza in front of the National Palace. *La Chabela* is the Godmother that leads the parade, a white skeleton painted over a black

banner, touching her genitals.

Partakers wear wigs, eyeglasses, false noses and moustaches; they dress as guerrilla fighters, peasants, army privates, “Indians”, workers, “Arabs”, priests, businessmen, and politicians, domestic and wild animals. They cry out against the latest abuses, offending the mothers of the undesirables and drink abundant liquor, spraying foul and repulsive substances on the observers. The parade’s main attractions are the gilded floats where those incidents that captured the media’s and public’s interest the previous year are represented. Formerly the parade was a showcase of creativity and political schooling. In recent years it has lost some of its earlier shine because of obscure associations between organizers and corrupt government officials under the Alfonso Portillo administration (2000-2004). Notwithstanding, its chief Bakhtian grotesque features, where exaggeration and excrescencies have the main role, are still present. For example, during the 1980 parade, a year when kidnappings and political murders were at its peak, the *huelgueros* presented a giant phallus —*una gran verga*— as long as the float’s trailer platform. At the front of the vehicle there was a sign that read: “With love dedicated to the 82 old whores from the Independent Civic Association of Women”, an Army officers wives civic committee that canvassed for the political campaign of General Romeo Lucas (1978-1982).

The phallus and the whore, especially the Big Whore, are narratives that best picture excesses of the grotesque body in Guatemala. The symbolic representational field that surrounds the phallus gathers a repertoire of expressions that are metaphors of daily violence, death and alcohol in mostly male environments, though frequently attended by women of all social strata. This includes overwhelming contempt for women’s bodies and the abused mother, that are present in the known insult that goes beyond the son of a bitch that is used elsewhere in Latin America, and lands on the *hijodelagranputa*. Its counterpart

is the grotesque sacredness of the mother that is celebrated in the name of the Virgin Mary and her son Jesus Christ. The Holy Week in Guatemala shows other features of the grotesque body and its ambivalences. Usually the same men and women that attend the *Huelga de Dolores* assist with great devotion to the *Via Crucis*, the solemn Masses and processions that take place on the streets of Guatemala City from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. On that week there are at least 30 processions renowned worldwide for their profusion of penitents, images, frankincense, candles, flowers, ornaments, food and drinks, all dedicated to the celebration of the death and passion of Christ the Lord. The same people that laugh noisily while escorting the *Huelga de Dolores* pageant, immerse themselves in the ritual and aesthetic display of icons found in private homes, streets and churches, and in the embellishment of processions, ceremonies, music, carpets, fireworks, bombs, and attire, along with the food specially prepared according to tradition and strict religious observance.

General attention is drawn to the images of Jesus Christ and the Holy Virgin Mary in a wide set of sceneries and attitudes. Icons are jewels of Colonial art with abundant motives and places to observe the grotesque body and its fusion with the cosmic world. Many penitents are disguised in Guatemalan's projection of "Palestinian" garments. Wealthy followers are dressed in a black suit with white shirt and black tie. They enjoy the privilege of holding the carrier at the beginning and putting it back in place at the end of the procession, what is known as the "Turno de Honor", reserved for prominent fraternity members, both male and female. After several pageants from different churches with images of Christ carrying a finely decorated cross and Virgins with daggers in the heart, at the end of Good Friday, the coffin with the deceased body of Christ moves along the streets of Antigua Guatemala and of the capital city. On Saturday, the grotesque body surges once

again with the burning of the image of Judas. In many barrios throughout the country, a natural size marionette symbolizes the traitor Apostle, which is later burned with laughter and obscene insults against neighbors that didn't contribute to buying fireworks and helping with the event. The week ends with the collective blessing of the Easter fire, a ritual reminiscent of the Middle Ages that Catholics interpret as a gift from Jesus reborn.

Both the *Huelga de Dolores* and the Holy Week are sites of assembly (Stallybrass and White 1986:80) for the low class and impoverished middle class people. It is fascinating to see the public association of religious faith and the most obscene and outrageous discourses during the most pious period of the year, the Holy Week. Both celebrations show a means of defeating political oppression and cosmic fear with laughter and ritual sacrifice. At first view, both collective performances seem to repeat the anxieties and frustrations of a society devastated by counterinsurgency. Nevertheless, from a broader perspective the *Huelga de Dolores* and the Holy Week celebrations exhibit the solid, unyielding presence of the grotesque body: on the one hand the ludicrous parade and its array of lubricity and excrescencies; on the other, the drama of the death of God's son. Together they publicly reconstitute the assembly of the pre-modern ancient body and the classical modern body of bourgeois moral. The ancient body challenges the dominant moral values and the supremacist mentality that despises the underworld inhabited by the barbaric civil majority. In this underworld verbal energy and ancient knowledge elements are summoned to suspend good manners, basic urban norms and social hygiene. Thus, socializing takes place through sweat, blood, feces, urine and the festive or ritual consumption of spirited drinks and special foods. The ablution and plunging into the ocean by the beach as part of the anonymous mass are all part of a cathartic means to temporally interrupt everyday life and substitute it with an emotional blow that embraces assorted

actors and meanings.

### ***La firma***

On December 28th 1996, I was invited by a friend to assist in the eve of the signing of the peace accords in front of the National Palace in Guatemala City. There, I found myself among a group of university professionals, journalists, writers, filmmakers and artists who survived the armed conflict and who gathered that evening not so much to celebrate, but to exchange greetings and jokes about the peace negotiations. One of them, somewhat agitated by the effects of alcohol shouted out: “this shit is the petite bourgeoisie-with-automobile’s party *hijos de la gran puta*”. That same evening a correspondent from the Mexican daily *Excelsior* asked every now and then: “¿where is the *lumpen*?” The “*lumpen*” were sleeping or getting ready for the next work day, something that did not necessarily include heeding the *firma* of the peace agreement the following day. An hour later, an underemployed university professor, expressed his feelings about the endorsement: “I feel like telling those cerotes ‘come on *hijos de la gran puta*, just sign that shit. Things are going to stay the same anyway.” In fact, unlike the 1994 peace agreements in El Salvador, in Guatemala the signing of the peace agreement was seen by the general population as a deal decided among elites. Early the next morning, an auto mechanic manifested his skepticism: “Y vos que crees, esos cerotes lo único que quieren es que les llegue un pijo de pisto para seguir hueviando”. A local merchant, more worried about *lo del diario* (daily needs) than about *la firma*, expressed: “hey look, this would only get better if we could have another General Ubico that shot all those crooks *hijosdelagranputa* that have tormented us so much”.

In a park near the main gathering site, before the ceremony began, there was a group



of homeless adolescents, many of them orphans that came to the city as children after fleeing the massacres. They sleep and live in the streets and combine unemployment with delinquency, shoe shining, car washing or carrying goods around the markets. This group was enjoying the humor of a would-be-mime, a guy whose only mime-like attributes were his lips painted in white. Instead of gestures or acrobatics he used an ample repertoire of *malas palabras* to make fun of everything and everyone. A few steps away, a group of Maya-Quichés from Totonicapan danced without fanfare on the bare earth. In another corner of the park, under the trees, members of a peasant organization opposed to civic patrols were playing a marimba with a melancholy monotone and technical excellence, pleasing a small circle of indigenous spectators and working class Ladinos. In the middle of the circle, three or four couples danced their cheeks crimson from sun and drink. Near the *marimbistas*, a man was selling "peace balloons" for one Quetzal, while another showed pornographic magazines to a group of on-lookers to promote a tonic alleged to increase sexual potency. In the meantime, the evangelists distributed their propaganda in the midst of a barrage of insults.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the park, the ex guerrilla fighters howled their disapproval at the folkloric ballet that Guatemala's Institute of Tourism planned for the consumption of foreign television. Their show went on poorly in the park due to the presence of indigenous guerrillas and members of the Mayan movement. As night fell, while the fictitious Indians of the Institute of Tourism danced, many of those present began to shout out a long list of names of their martyrs and wishes of long life to the fallen combatants. In terms of bystanders and sympathizers of the peace process, more than fifty thousands people gathered in front of the National Palace at the moment of the peace agreement signing. The most active among those present were indigenous members of

human rights organizations, relatives of the missing, workers of non-government organizations, ex insurgents and ex collaborators of the guerrilla, university and high school students and residents of the city's poorest neighborhoods. For the Ladino majority that have never visited towns such as Chichicastenango, nor the rural countryside for that matter, more for lack of money than for lack of motivation, one of the most interesting attractions was to see indigenous acrobats jumping from an unusually high flying pole located in front of the Metropolitan Cathedral. "Que linda esa mierda", said an impressed newspaper vendor. It was the first opportunity in his life, another man told me, to express his admiration for *los huevos*, required to hang upside down from such a high post.

Soon after, the official signing of the accords ceremony began inside the National Palace simultaneously broadcast to the crowd outside on giant freestanding screens in front of the building. Each time that the name of the guerrilla organization was mentioned during the ceremony a group of youth from the capital city's marginal neighborhoods quickly constructed a human pyramid from which they waved a giant Cuban flag with the face of *Che* Guevara, one of the day's most powerful images ignored by the official and foreign television. It was the first time I saw so many youth wearing t-shirts with 25 or 30 different versions of *Che* Guevara's face at a public gathering in Guatemala. In former times, to show the face of Guevara in public was to buy oneself a ticket to the cemetery. After the signing, the President emerged from the Palace to light "an eternal flame of peace" at a site hidden among the exalted crowd, to the sound of insults, whistles and boos. To make things worse, the moment of silence programmed for the lighting of the flame was interrupted by the shouts repeating the names of countless citizens buried by the war. Some cried, others clenched their teeth or bit their tongues, as the President lighted "the eternal flame" in memory of the martyrs, that extinguished itself the following day due to lack of propane

gas.

Several days later in a neighborhood on the outskirts of the city, standing around a small bonfire light up to celebrate the arrival of the New Year of 1997, I asked an adolescent his opinion on the peace agreements. Without much thought he answered: "this shit was just an entertainment granted to those *pisados*". An ex *kaibil*, a national version of the Green Berets, that had been present that night, faked throwing himself into the fire. Several full time thieves came by to share greetings and New Year's embraces. Inspired by the Beatles's music coming out from an old record player on the sidewalk, a drunk fellow came, danced along for a while and finally lied down to warm himself beside the fire. In the midst of drunkenness, not one among those present missed the opportunity to express their desire to throw the drunkard into the fire.

### ***Escatológico hasta la mierda***

To be true to with the conceptual outline of the popular Spanish dialect spoken by Ladinos in Guatemala, we would have to say that it is "shitfully" scatological. *Malas palabras* spoken with *mierda* in between are expressions of the rabble's rage, what Franz Fanon called the *gangrene of the colonial world in revolt*. It is a universe of shit expressed with its full warfare potency. It is the shit that the Mexican painter from Oaxaca, Francisco Toledo, metaphors in his drawings, and the Mexican ethnohistorian Alfredo López Austin analyzes for the Aztec prehispanic society.

The vocal art of scatology, prevailingly masculine, is nurtured with conviviality, with the desire to exchange words and enjoy sociability, as much as with non-values that are part of the splintered underground society that has survived poverty, dictatorships, military governments, and a bloody war. Privileged milieus for the reproduction of the

scatological vocal art around the shit and the *malas palabras* are the social gatherings that are spontaneously held in many thrift shops in Guatemala, some of which offer a couple of tables so people can have lunch, drink a soda or a beer, an *octaviano* (measure) of booze or simply stay for a while for a chat. Workshop workers, debt collectors, government officials, the unemployed and underemployed, and even burglars gather around the tables or on the sidewalk during free leisure days, to talk about different topics. These linguistic exchanges can be highly elaborated, especially in oral duels that sometimes pave the way towards full-fledged street fights. Crudely expressed disdain is nurtured from primary school —mostly by boys—, and mainly aimed against mothers. Thus, from an early age, chiefly amongst Ladinos, Guatemalans learn the most homophobic, sexist, racist and scornful insults in order to strike the fellow man where it hurts the most. One day in March 2002, outside a primary school in the zona 3 in Guatemala City, a boy no more than ten years old, was telling another boy that he had just “sacado la madre”: “No tengo madre solo padre para tu puta madre” (I have no mother, only a father for your fucking mother).

These exchanges can also simply be a means to ease the pain or frustration that have accumulated through the week or function as exercises of sociological imagination based on a value system opposed to the dominant moral. They are anti-values that reassess sociability, the value of words, and criticism against social newcomers. Frequently, it also means the adherence to an anti-capitalist heterodoxy that appreciates learned explanations notwithstanding the want of information and books, since extreme poverty forces people to live by a scarce supply of services and goods. For instance, Eliezer Marroquín, an auto mechanic during the day and a self-learned philosopher during the night, says that a cousin of his that works at the customs office:

...smuggled a book that criticized the capitalist system. There it spoke about

the time when the *gringos* said that they had the atomic bomb. A little later the Russians had it too! What did that mean? That if the *gringos* were revealing they had the bomb, they were making us understand that whoever gets cocky would get Dick in return!

This kind of thinking is based on admiration for learned knowledge and anti-capitalist heterodoxy with a grotesque highlighting, as can be seen in another of Eliezer's interventions:

“Once I was talking to a *cerote* that was in Law School: do you want to read a good book? That *cerote* talked big of being a Marxist then. When I gave it to the *cerote* he was *holgando el pisado*. You know what the *hijuelagranputa* did? He disappeared from sight! And I was looking for him. So one day I went to Law School and said to him: What about my book *cerote*? So he says to me: Hey look, your book I can't give it to you right now because I don't have it with me, but if you want I can give you another. He says. I'm sure you'll like it. He gave me a *cerote* book that was called *Marxist Revisionism*. Fuuuck! It was like by a Swedish guy. You know, the *cerote* wanted to give me another book. Shit, I started reading the book; shit, it was revising a bunch of ideas from Marx, Hegel and Engels. *A la gran puta mano*, you got to have a lot of time to read that *cerote* book that's stuffed with history”.

Spanish and American colonial picaresque and the art of filo-encyclopedic speech that runs from the *cerote* to the *hijuelagranputa*, can be compared with other contexts where Western tradition is reproduced more by the power of speech than by the force of learned knowledge. In a different story, projected praise of the *antichafarote* (anti-military) feeling, which reminds us of Holderlin walking on foot to Germany, Joaquín Rodríguez pictures a Guatemalan-like Beethoven that refused to play for a man-of-arms of his time:

Some dudes came to Beethoven's house and ordered that he play a song. He refused, he didn't want to. All right, if you don't play for us, you will be executed by hanging, they said. So Beethoven got up and walked 8 miles up to a memorial of that same old *cerote* that commanded him to play. He walked 8 miles and tore down the figure of that *hijuelagranputa* military. *Lo hizo mierda*, and then walked back the same 8 miles but still he didn't please him.

Once again the *cerote*, the shit and the *hijuelagranputa* take their place to restore the anti-military feeling that springs from the grotesque underworld.

Each part of the scatological body and its excrescencies constitute by themselves independent though interconnected fields of representation. The rebel subjectivity expressed in this scatology projects cosmic fear and the ancient body, constantly modifying strategies of political defiance used not only by the mob to ridicule power, and those hold fast to it. Within the middle and upper classes, the end of the civil war in Guatemala seemed to foster anti-patriarchal and anti-authoritarian ways of disobedience that express themselves in a more relaxed and boorish way of using the local Spanish dialect in everyday exchange. Lack of restrictions in using dirty language has flourished mainly among the middle class and elite teenagers, especially in girls. This phenomenon grows in correspondence with an increase in sexual liberty and more entertainment options. A phenomenon that is synthesized in a phrase I overheard from a young girl in a restaurant at Panajachel, a town by the lake of Atitlán, which characterizes the Guatemalan pleasure-seeking intemperance: “Comer, coger y chupar” (Eat, fuck and drink). This lifestyle does not predominate among upper class teenagers, but it is symptomatic of the way that the conservative moral has eroded and lost ground in front of juvenile rebelliousness. Body language is still deeply sexist and bluntly obscene, but it is not infrequent to hear women of all social classes using a wide range of insults or practicing homophobic, racist and sexist gestures, considered politically incorrect in the industrialized world. This comes to show that the grotesque body is not an exclusive asset of the underdog resistance, as some might interpret. Even though the low classes display discourses and practices that incarnate the traumas surged from colonial history and economic insolvency, there is a common ground where the grotesque body is open to emotional demands of men and women of the middle and high-classes. In the same line of obscene noncompliance a group of former students of the Rafael Landívar University, a Jesuit university where middle and upper class youth

attend, published a single volume of the *Chalupa* magazine that reproduced in its cover a fragment of a Chinese drawing that portrayed a woman caressing her clitoris.

## Conclusions

In Guatemala, *malas palabras* transform the body into the haven of culture but it might be said that almost any approach to the *hijosdelagranputa* linguistic netherworld will fall short from capturing in writing the vitality of day-by-day oral discourse. Following this line of thought we could explore symbolic violence phenomena as an expressive culture within neocolonial capitalism, or to the specific experience of verbal discourse in societies strongly affected by structural violence as happens in Central American nations.

Perhaps foul language wouldn't deserve the status of "aesthetic expressions" according to Bordieu. Nevertheless, for its practitioners it is part of a vocal art that provides them with the opportunity for creativity, dissent and cultural defiance, not necessarily anti-colonial nor unshackling, though regularly associated with physical and symbolic violence. It is the collective hilarity, the "having a laugh" (Willis 1981) some times taken to its crudest and non-compliant extreme. We must acknowledge that a non-compliant discourse is not unavoidably counter-hegemonic nor should it be of necessity liberating, in particular if it is constrained by an unfettered male dominance. Thus, "having a laugh" does not inevitably imply espousing a liberating agenda similar to the southern Texas Mexican American narratives rendered by José Limón (1989) as counter-hegemonic discourses. Nevertheless, shared effervescence can manifest simultaneously in the "gut feeling of being part of the mass" (Stallybrass and White 1986) as much as in religious gatherings and strict observance (Durkheim 1987).

In patriarchal, sexist and racist societies, of which there are plenty around the post-

industrial and neocolonial world, scorn and humor can replace the necessary oxygen of everyday life. From an aristocratic viewpoint that avows for the dominant moral, fear and respect for the forces of nature, or suspicion for the prevailing power corroborate the inferiority and madness that is expected from *la mara*. But for the rebel subjectivity of *la mara*, sharing a common language against memory of oppression and subversion, dissolve individual egos and conform a collective self-identity that is expressed through this vocal art, largely ignored by foreign and local scholars working in Central America.

As a colonized being, the Ladino-caste in Guatemala, seeks its liberation through different means: war (Fanon); the esthetic racial redemption, music and carnavalization (Gilroy 1987); *relajo* (Díaz Barriga 1997) or through *machismo* (Lewis). Regarding the colonized's freedom, Fanon is the only one to offer an analysis of the outcast in the context of national liberation. According to Gilroy, the road entails the use of open spaces for political creativity and the democratization of reason, and as stated by Díaz Barriga, *relajo* is an effective vehicle to express opposition to the status quo, a counter-hegemonic means expressed in jokes, derision and scorn, and the transient suspension of somberness and solemnity. In any case, these are measures to solve anxieties and apprehensions motivated by deprivation among ordinary people. From a more conservative standing, Lewis dealt with the rabble's profile as a character that assumes failure and is caught in self-exclusion from progress.

Regardless of the perspective, the cultural repertoires of the dispossessed working class include a verbal art that is part of the esthetic experience of the popular Ladino. Its sexist, macho, homophobic and self-derogatory characteristics do not hamper the capacity of this verbal art of being, in many ways "the rebuttal of a realistic and compliant mind" (Marcuse), as much as maker of its own aesthetic compositions. Perhaps Bordieu's



statement that “aesthetics can only be built within a world free from need” does not apply to the study of the verbal art practiced by the working-class. Or else the aesthetic of the educated elite leaves no room for a marginal and uncivilized aesthetic. As Levine claims “at the end, it is saying that *culture* is something created by the few for the few, threatened by the many, something endangered by democracy and by the conviction that culture cannot come from the young, the inexperienced, the underdog”.

## Conclusions

¿Que sucedería si un indígena llegara a la presidencia de la república en Guatemala?  
Todos andaríamos de *corte*  
Magalí Santizo  
Colegio El Buen Pastor 09.2003

“La única solución para esa gente (los indígenas) sería una dictadura férrea, un Mussolini o un Hitler que los obligara a trabajar y a educarse, o los exterminara a todos”  
(Casás 1998:128)

“La dictadura no existe, existe el poder y alguien tiene que ejercerlo”  
Arnoldo Ramírez Anaya  
(Urrutia 2002:3)

This dissertation argues that interethnic relations in Guatemala should be understood within the frame of global racism and not only as a result of the Indian-Ladino dichotomy that depicts Ladinos as whites, leaving unquestioned the role tutelary relations and relations of servitude play in obstructing citizenship development and justifying authoritarianism and regressive modernization.

I have positioned my approach between the *clasesmediarizacion del mundo* and the racialization of inequality as they appear in *melting pot* and “social integration” policies advanced by applied anthropology in Guatemala. I have analyzed the failed conversion of Indians into middle-class Ladinos during the 1944-1962 period and the symbolic decline of both Indians and Ladinos into *shumos*, *choleros* and *mucos* during post-war Guatemala (1962-1996).

In contrast to Benedict Anderson’s idea about the unifying role print capitalism plays in building nations as imagined communities (1983) bringing legitimacy to the actions of the ruling elite, Guatemala’s print capitalism accomplished the double purpose of imagining the nation as segregated community of whites and non-whites, an exclusionary separation that was projected through an ambiguous and contradictory opposition between

*indigenous* and *non-indigenous*. Different from Steven Palmer's views in this respect (1990), I argue that print capitalism in Guatemala contributed to the fragmentation of the national self through the propagation of representations about cultural and racial superiority and inferiority that ultimately obstructed the institutional development of a national culture centered on *mestizaje indígena*. The State and its intellectuals refused to develop a legitimizing discourse of *mestizaje oficial*, emblematic of the Guatemalan nationality and prone to selectively adopt some of the manifestations of *mestizaje indígena*, even if that discourse would be in contradiction with the socio-racial hierarchy ruled by whiteness as in the Mexican case.

The Ladino society was officially represented not only as the non-indigenous counterpart of the Indian world, as would later be portrayed in many historiographic and anthropological sources, but as part of, or equivalent to, the white elite. The self-denigration of mestizo natives as opposed to the racial pride of whites and whitened Ladinos became a strategic factor in the "failure" of nation-building in Guatemala, and reinforced the visible invisibility of the mobilizing power of whiteness across national, ethnic and class lines. During the late nineteenth century, the liberal re-appropriation of *non-indigeness* served the political purposes of a new branch of national and foreign landowners that re-accommodated the labor structure in order to guarantee labor supply for plantations and public works. As in colonial times, being non-indigenous as modern capitalism arrived in Guatemala, offered a safe haven against forced labor, and also opened up new opportunities for the dissemination of ideologies of cultural and racial superiority and inferiority, advancing a local version of civilization supported by Creole and Ladino intellectuals and foreign immigrants. The reproduction of that power, grounded in representations of everyone's place in society according to privilege and economic

influence, gradually expanded the hegemonic space for anti-Indian and anti-mestizo racism that consequently facilitated the reproduction of authoritarianism and relations of servitude among most of the Ladinos.

In that respect, General Jorge Ubico's double depiction of the *Indio puro* as a loyal hard worker, in contrast with the lazy and treacherous *Indio aladinado*, constituted two of the most potent hegemonic images that continue to help to criminalize poverty and "cultural impurity" in Guatemala today. His "cultural conservatism" and his obsessions about the values of the "pure Indian", buttressed the implantation of legal dispositions that "protected" "authentic Indians" from the influence of indigenous intellectuals, Ladinos and political activists or dissidents. Ubico's defence of "pure Indians" is reminiscent of the governmentality invoked by old and current followers of Rafael Carrera's XIX century regime and his re-institution of the colonial system that divided *República de Indios* from *República de Españoles*. This separation was justified not only by the need to keep unaltered the "social peace of the servile relationships" as conceived by Ubico's dictatorship, but also to avoid that Ladinos, and in particular *Indios aladinados*, from becoming agents of "corruption" and political unrest within indigenous communities.

In the long history of servile relationships that has marked racial, social and gender differences and inequalities in Guatemala, to be a servant, or *cholero*, has been associated with being "Indian," *Indio aladinado*, poor, and non-white. As in many other countries around the colonized world, during all of Guatemala's history, the presence of both male and female servants has influenced the perpetuation of servile relationships. The upper and middle classes, often self-represented as white or Ladino, have regularly used the terms *Indio aladinado*, *igualado* and *cholero* to denigrate domestic servants and to ridicule "ordinary people" that they consider socially and racially inferior. However, during the

1990s, as a result of indigenous activism and of the greater visibility of mestizo and indigenous urban youth, the virulence of the anti-*cholero*, anti-*muco* and anti-*shumo* sentiment in Guatemala increased, widening the symbolic clash between those presumed “white” and those presumed “non-whites,” a phenomenon that can hardly be understood through the Indian-Ladino dichotomy. The perception of the higher social strata is that *cholero*, *muco* or *shumo* youths are uneducated and unemployed, are prone to crime because of their tendency to laziness, are malnourished and therefore not apt to benefit from school, much less from university. For many of these unemployed or underemployed young people the only options open are those of the “informal economy,” common crime, or joining any of the organized crime networks linked to the counterinsurgency organizations of the past.

The shame and humiliation of being or looking indigenous, of being poor or lacking access to the markers of superior status, or being considered “new money,” “show-off,” or “lacking taste” makes each person or group live in constant fear of being stigmatized as inferior. *Muco*, *shumo* and *cholero* are terms through which the racist and classist mentality is united. It emphasizes those terms to subjugate people for the way they look, dress, speak, wear their hair, for the music they prefer, the places where they gather and the foods they eat, or for their social condition. Apparent in all these aspects is the vilification of the indigenous in process of Ladinoization, of the urban indigenous and impoverished Ladinos. These hybrid insults are part of a colonial past characterized by the presence of masters and servants, a past close to the symbolic universe of those who for decades have been mistreated as *indios aladinados*, *lamidos*, *chancles aguacateros*, *cachimbiros* or *igualados* in contrast with “pure” indigenous people, who are dedicated, honest workers and servants. As a source of cheap and semi-slave labor, “pure Indians” are the non-visible

producers of the wealth enjoyed by the upper classes connected to export agriculture and at the same time the main victims of political oppression and racist discrimination.

*Muco*, *shumo* or *cholero* are equivalent terms used to put down various forms of mestizo and working-class consumption and cultural exchange, which can be synthesized with all their contradictions into three factors that are fundamental to the dominant mentality: the cult of the “pure Indian” as obedient and dedicated servant, the portrayal of the mestizo Ladino as lazy and rebellious subordinate, and the racist, anti-indigenous and anti-mestizo sentiments in Ladinos, whites and Creoles fostered by both representations. Lower class Ladinos can be both subject to the anti-*shumo*, anti-*cholero* and anti-*muco* racism and still perpetuate racism toward Indians and that is why socio-racial interactions are so resistant to change in Guatemala.

In critical conversation with the dichotomy that separates indigenous people and Ladinos, I propose an approach to Guatemalan racism that includes symbolic wars between *gente decente* and *gente corriente*, fueled by the anti-Indian and anti-mestizo sentiments and the prominence of the “*respeto al canche*”. I present an explanation of racism as hegemony grounded in the mobilizing power of whiteness and anti-communism and how these attitudes support the perpetuation of servile and tutelary relationships. Whiteness and anti-communism criminalized poverty, justified racial and cultural inequality and aggrandized the importance of being white and wealthy. As part of cultural modernity, both reflect a contradiction between promoting liberal democracy and consumerism and the right to decide the fate of those who, due to their racial, social or cultural condition are non-citizens or pre-citizens that deserve to be protected, defended or suppressed. In that respect as global and elitist ideologies, whiteness and anti-communism naturalize the reproduction of socio-racial hierarchies and distort the development of citizenship and nation-building.

Guatemala's elite perceive that the new democratizing influences in the post war era are a bad symptom that the good old times, when everybody knew their place in society, are gone forever. Unable to become a leading class through the institutional development of a national culture based on *mestizaje indígena*, the dominant class is trapped now in a double fear against the *guerra étnica de los indios* and the *rebelión de los choleros*. This double fear illustrates the paradoxes of the Ladino superiority portrayed as white superiority, the visible invisibility of whiteness and the role of *mestizaje eugenésico* as vehicle of social mobility mostly among those that aspire to be part of the *gente decente*. The fears of ethnic war and of *cholero* rebellion against their white and Ladino patrons are the most dramatic consequence of the elite's political isolation and its lack of capacity to promote the State's institutional development. Over many years, the Guatemalan elite behaved as a *divine caste* without any sense of political or moral obligation towards the less favoured members of society. That *divine caste* is facing now the erosion of the hegemonic representations, which, for many decades, established the place of everyone in society. This erosion is the result of new transnational dynamics propelled by the political actions of the Maya movement, the increasing numbers of plebeians Indians and Ladinos with access to English language, commodities and new technologies, and the public pressure for institutional democratization and social reform. In that respect the erosion of hegemonic representations is propitiating new forms of political alignment between Indians and mestizos or post-Ladinos stigmatized today as *shumos*.

This dissertation offers a new approach to racism in Guatemala as a combination of anti-Indian and anti-mestizo sentiments that contribute to the reproduction of a socio-racial hierarchy that operates at national and global level and can hardly be explained through the Indian-Ladino dichotomy. I claim that racism in Guatemala in many ways works as a form

of hegemony grounded in representations from colonial and modern origin that are assumed by people from different classes and cultural backgrounds. Racism in Guatemala is the most important element for the reproduction of regressive modernization, tutelary relations and relations of servitude. Guatemalan racism needs to be framed within the dislocations resulting from the dismantling of revolutionary nationalism and the politics of Cold War associated with whiteness and anti-communism and not simply through the cultural polarities of ethnicity, constructed by anthropologists and critical observers. From the politics of identity to the policing of identities, the power to define who is who in the gallery of ethnicities gives anthropologists an epistemic superiority that can be seen as an additional attribute of global Whiteness, a phenomenon that has gone unquestioned after long years of regressive modernization. Guatemala's process of regressive modernization contrasts with other Third World countries where capitalist development even under drastic differences in income distribution, included radical agrarian reform, expansion of the internal market, modernization of political parties, literacy campaigns and the construction of the State as a *legitimate* and constitutional referee among social classes. Instead, Guatemala exhibited from his early beginnings as a republic, profound contradictions between theory and practice of classic Liberalism addressed to nation-building, high concentration of land and income distribution in few hands, dictatorship and military regimes, geopolitical factors that during the twentieth century decided the dismantling of revolutionary nationalism, a ruling class unable to direct institutional development, strategic convergence among whiteness, anticommunism and racialization of inequality, weak development of its middle classes, militarization of territory, society and the State, the execution of a genocide, and the institutional reproduction of violence as mediator of social and individual interactions.



Racism as an expression of that violence needs to be interpreted within that kind of modernization, and violence as a structural feature of Guatemalan society and history cannot be reduced to the consummation of genocide during the 1980s'. Racism and violence have excluded Indians and popular Ladinos from citizenship and any multicultural or intercultural approach would need to address the complexities of the legacy of the peculiar expressions of cultural modernity and capitalist modernization in Guatemala and the way they aggravate the absence of political togetherness.

There is not yet in Guatemala particular legislation to penalize racism and discrimination and there is not enough public consciousness about implementing public policies to eliminate both phenomena<sup>266</sup>. However, after the signing of the peace agreement, there emerged programs that aimed to build a new sensibility more respectful of cultural difference and appreciative of intercultural relations within a process of democratization and political participation. The struggle against racism in Guatemala should include not only denunciation, but also the accumulation of empirical information, case studies that could be used for the construction of analytical axis in order to typify crimes of racism and discrimination. Because mentalities change more slowly than institutions, it is important that the main effort concentrated on education aimed at the transnational decolonization of mentalities and not simply at the penalization of racist crimes.

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<sup>266</sup> Josefina dice que a diferencia de cuando ella era niña, “yo siento que el racismo tal vez es menos. Tal vez es un poco menos que antes cuando se tomaba a los indígenas como servidores. En cambio ahora se ven indígenas que se han superado, que ya tienen sus propios negocios, y están bastante bien. Incluso uno se queda admirado y se pregunta ¿por qué el tiene y yo no?, cosas así. Como estrategia de educación dirigida a los guatemaltecos que son racistas, Josefina dice que ella “los agarraría y los llevaría a vivir con los indígenas. Y si son racistas con los negros, los agarraría y los pondría directamente con los negros. Para que se den cuenta de las penas y todo lo que tienen que pasar esa gente para vivir y que ellos suficiente tienen con sus problemas”.

In Guatemala the lights of Enlightenment were never turned on during the XIX century, and when the bourgeois revolution was just beginning, a coup d'Etat came to destroy it on 1954. The early nationalist revolution almost disappeared and the militarization of society and the State provoked the collapse of the last remnants of liberal democracy. From being the “escenario del primer experimento de integración social en el mundo”; ten years after, Guatemala became the “primer plan piloto de contrainsurgencia para el continente” (Jonas 1981). The unavoidable question in this case is how is it possible that in a country that was thought to be, during the mid 1950s, the first showcase for a US sponsored experiment of Ladinoization and “social integration”, resulted in one of the worst genocides of modern history.

In many senses, Guatemala is a country where people live with a suppressed consciousness of the traumas that characterize their national self and their social memory. Recently a collective effort has come to light, to undo the silence about the internal war, the disturbing impact of racism; and the slow implementation of the peace agreements<sup>267</sup>. An alliance of non-governmental organizations, United Nations, international donors, academic institutions and religious organizations are investing in the training of human resources, the creation of new organizations and the construction of new political sensibilities. Nevertheless, people from various social levels and cultural groups still support the historical necessity of dictatorship and speculate about the possibility of a new internal war<sup>268</sup>. Schools do not teach about the past war,<sup>269</sup> but young Guatemalans have their own

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<sup>267</sup> En relación a la relevancia que tuvo la firma de la paz, dice Gabriel Ramírez, estudiante de bachillerato en un instituto público: “Para mí, no hubo nada, me fue indiferente. Mi posición es de pesimismo, de cero credibilidad si vamos a partir de algo, empiezo de cero, y no es que sea negativo, no soy ni menos ni más. Hasta ahorita, los actores para mí son la población civil, todo el que está abandonado, los desplazados, los retornados y los refugiados, para mí ellos son los actores de toda esta comedia, que para mí es muy trágica. Ellos son los actores, porque son los que están mas abandonados.

<sup>268</sup> Le pregunto a Daniel de la Escuela de Ciencias Comerciales si hay posibilidades de otra guerra en Guatemala. “Si hay posibilidades”. ¿Tendría apoyo popular eso? “Si, porque aquí la mayoría es pobre. A la hora de que tuvieran un

interpretation about the causes of the conflict, the guerillas' reasons and the current performance of the ex-guerrillas acting as politicians<sup>270</sup>. There are people that stand for the

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enfrentamiento con los ricos y se ensañasen los pobres contra los ricos, se unirían tal vez<sup>268</sup>. Pero sólo son hipótesis que tal vez algún día se logren, pero a mi criterio si tal vez tendrían apoyo. Es inevitable, por la represión de los años anteriores, póngale en esas masacres algunos familiares se fueron, o mataron a toda su familia, y tienen mucho rencor". ¿Se podría dar otra guerra en Guatemala? le pregunto a Byron, que asiste a la misma escuela. "Hay causas", me responde con el mismo laconismo de Daniel. ¿No será que tiene que salir un nuevo liderazgo que piense de otra manera? "Yo pienso que si se pudiese dar pero estos señores los mandarían a matar. Lo que pasó con el presidente hace no sé cuantos años, 5 tal vez. Con el de la UCN, que lo mataron en El Quiché, casi yendo a Santa Cruz de El Quiché. Era el futuro presidente, como vieron que iba más por los pobres, que iba a regular bastante, mejor lo mataron". Dalila estudiante de magisterio en un instituto público es cakchiquel y aludiendo a las posturas de la guerra étnica, dice que "una lucha armada lo que haría es afectar mas al país. No debería haber una guerra porque si yo estoy bien mentalmente y alguien me humilla, yo le contestaría pero no me sentiría mal. No me sentiría mal que alguien me humillara por ser de traje. La verdad es que no todos piensan igual que uno". Leticia que asiste al mismo instituto, sin embargo es menos optimista. "Podría ser, dice, para reclamar nuestros derechos porque bastantes derechos se nos han negado y nosotros deberíamos de tener todos los derechos que ellos (los ladinos) tienen". Rogelio Albarrán, desempleado que no termino el bachillerato, no cree que en Guatemala vaya a darse una guerra de los indígenas contra los ladinos, "porque hace poco fuimos a Jalapa y me dí cuenta que (los campesinos) asumen el ser indígena y no el ladino y cuando alguien les pregunta ¿y usted qué es?, ¿qué se considera?, ¿indígena? Se ve como que la gente también está asumiendo su parte de ser indígena, su identidad. Yo no creo que haya conflicto entre etnias tal vez entre tierras en zonas límite, allí si lo hay, pero en cuestiones así no concibo." Josefina tampoco cree que en Guatemala los indígenas vayan a rebelarse en contra de los ladinos, "porque se los tienen muy bien manejados". ¿Y una rebelión de los sirvientes contra sus patronos? No, tampoco, porque ellos dependen mucho económicamente de ellos. Carmen en cambio exagera diciendo "ya falta poco aunque la verdad los indígenas poco a poco se van superando y viendo la forma de sobresalir. La verdad es que no creo que hubiera algo así (como una guerra pero las personas indígenas se están rebelando y ya no se dejan. Eso si es cierto. Para mí eso es lo que deberían de haber hecho desde un principio, no dejarse porque también ellos mismos se hacen de menos, y de eso si me he dado cuenta porque están buscando la igualdad y ellos mismos se hacen de menos". A propósito de la posibilidad de una rebelión de indígenas contra ladinos, Daniel juega con el ellos y el nosotros y habla de la relación entre la pobreza y la subjetividad colectiva ahogada por el alcoholismo. "Yo creo que va a llegar el momento en el que el indígena se cansa de ser humillado, de sufrir las humillaciones de la gente que se cree superior, por ser ladinos y tener dinero y nosotros ser humildes y nos humillan, yo creo que va a llegar el día en que ellos se cansen, y van derrocar a cualquiera que este y ellos van a tomar el poder.

<sup>269</sup> Carmen Godínez, estudiante de magisterio en un instituto público, afirma que "la verdad ha sido poco lo que yo he oído sobre el conflicto armado. Solo me lo mencionan pero alguien que se ponga a contarme algo así no. Es raro que a uno le mencionen cosas que pasen en el país. Sobre el conflicto armado fue poco lo que vimos en la escuela. Lo que mas le enseñan a uno es la historia pero de hace siglos. Empiezan con lo de los mayas, de ahí con lo de Colón. Eso así ha sido y es poco lo que nos enseñan de lo de ahora. Le toman poca importancia a todo lo que ha pasado y es una pena porque nosotros deberíamos saber más por qué se valora tanto lo de Guatemala en el extranjero, y así lo valoraríamos un poco mas".

<sup>270</sup> Luisa Saravia, estudiante de un colegio de capa media baja en el centro de la ciudad, explica el origen de sus motivaciones políticas: "Cuando usted me preguntó sobre lo que me motivó para tener este tipo de mentalidad, lo que sucede es que tengo una mi tía que cuando ella tenía diecisiete años, estaba estudiando para ser guerrillera, estaba metida en todo eso. Una vez me lo contó y yo dije "que buena onda". Me gustó bastante. Me dió sus puntos de vista sobre lo que ella quería cambiar y a lo que estaba dispuesta. Ella y su novio estaban metidos en eso pero mataron al hermano de su novio y entonces fue como una llamada de atención y mejor se salió. Si no si hubiera seguido. Pero ella guardó ese idealismo y todo esto del Che Guevara, de Martin Luther King, de Malcom X, eso le gusta bastante y también yo he aprendido muchas cosas de ella. Tal vez no siempre hablamos de eso, pero el día que me contó todo eso, me quedé sorprendida, porque yo nunca me lo hubiera imaginado y me hace sentir orgullosa y eso me gusta". La guerrilla fracasó, según Nancy, porque "eran muy pocos los que apoyaban esas ideas. Eran más los que estaban de parte del gobierno y en la guerrilla no eran muchos y no se pudo, no se pudo, simplemente no se pudo contra ellos. Todos creemos que fue algo injusto que muchos se metieran de guerrilleros, pero murieron por sus ideales. Pero eso no tenía por que salir así ¿verdad? y por eso existe bastante resentimiento contra los políticos pues el dinero es solo para ellos. Y las personas que viven en los asentamientos ¿qué? Por eso roban". Josefina que vive en las inmediaciones de un grupo de guerrilleros desmovilizados en el municipio de Villa Nueva en el departamento de Guatemala, presenta una perspectiva sobre los exguerrilleros como gente pobre y luchadora, distinta a la que se publica en la prensa local sobre la ex izquierda de clase media de la URNG, sus faccionalismos y su falta de proyecto estratégico. "A esta situación se llegó por muchas cosas", dice Josefina: "Primero por la falta de educación de muchos guatemaltecos porque no sabemos nuestros derechos, al no saber leer ni escribir y no tener estudios las personas que si los tienen se aprovechan de los que no los tienen. Y segundo,

Army<sup>271</sup> and others that had relatives on both sides of the polarized conflict.<sup>272</sup> Facing the challenges of the future, however, is not easy after the long years of exclusion and political

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los guerrilleros estaban siendo entrenados para, como se dice, que me maten en la guerra pero que no maten mi ideología, ni mi espíritu sobre mi país. Los que estaban peleando por parte del ejército, si usted se da cuenta ahora están abandonados, están pidiendo su indemnización pero el gobierno no se las está dando; además aquí la tierra no es del hombre que la trabaja sino del que tiene mas influencias en el gobierno o mas dinero. Si usted ve, los acuerdos de paz se firmaron pero no se cumplen y para que se cumplan haría falta que la misma URNG obligara al gobierno a que se cumplieran. Los pensionados siguen esperando su dinero, los campesinos lo más que ganan al día son 5 quetzales, no se les ha aumentado el sueldo, no tienen beneficio del gobierno en salud, educación, vivienda, siguen igual, no tienen electricidad, no tienen agua, no tienen sanitarios y siguen en la extrema pobreza. Pero a los jóvenes no les importan partidos como la URNG. Media vez ellos estén bien, todo está bien. Yo tal vez por ser mujer me siento mal y me da mucha tristeza, me da pena por ellos (por los de la URNG) porque yo estoy bien económicamente, en mi familia tenemos de todo, tenemos comida, más ellos no, se están muriendo de hambre, se están enfermado, no hay médicos que los atiendan, no tienen educación y me siento mal por el hecho de que es mi país y son mis hermanos de sangre por decirlo así y yo no puedo hacer nada por ellos. En la URNG hay algunos que son pobres más sin embargo tienen una buena ideología y tienen ganas de verse mejor a ellos y a su país. Son los que siento que lucharon y por eso estaban allí metidos, peleando por ser mejores”.

<sup>271</sup> Estuardo Mansilla, alumno de un colegio privado de los mas caros de la ciudad, dice que “por el conflicto armado que sufrimos el ejército se quedó como el malo de la película, cosa con la que yo también estoy en desacuerdo. Pienso que tanto la guerrilla como el ejército tuvieron la misma culpa. Bueno a los pobres soldados los mataban, los acorralaban en las montañas, les salían y emboscaban los camiones. Si usted ve mucha gente que está ahorita en el ejército son indígenas que se reclutaron por su patria porque a pesar de todo el ejército se identifica con sus propios aldeanos. Puede ser que sea un manejo político en donde ganan a tal población para en un futuro tener más fortaleza. Lo miro con mi hermano (que está en el ejército) y me dice “aaala vos...”, bueno no utiliza esa palabra pero dice, “aaala que ganas de volver a la pachucada”, y ¿qué es la pachucada, los civiles, y frente a los civiles, los chafarotes, los chafas ¿por qué?, porque en relación al ejército, el civil es malo. Entonces como que son dos bandos. Pienso que eso fué lo que generó la guerra, el rechazo al ejército, esa fué una de las causas. Es por el mando que tienen, por el querer mandar. Con tal de ser poderosos, llegan a convertirse en dictadores. Quiera que no la mayoría de nuestros presidentes fueron dictadores, eran fascistas. Pienso que a eso puede ser que se deba el rechazo (al ejército) a una simple herencia del pasado cuando el ejército mandaba y la población civil obedecía”.

<sup>272</sup> Mynor Samayoa, estudiante de bachillerato en un colegio de clase media baja, dice que: “De la guerra que hubo aquí con la guerrilla cada cual tiene sus opiniones. Mi papá y casi todos mis tíos, excepto uno, estuvieron en ese tiempo en el ejército, y cuentan sus historias, cosas que les sucedieron. Dicen que tanto en el ejército como en la guerrilla habían unos que defendían al pueblo y otros que solo iban a explotar, a hacer destrozos a las aldeas. Fue algo favorable que se terminara eso, pero para dar una opinión concreta acerca de todo eso sería la de alguien que estuvo ahí, y conociera todo con sus puntos y referencias. Yo sinceramente, si conozco gente que estuvo de un lado y del otro. Que cuentan sus historias, guerrilleros y cosas así, y como le digo familiares que también estuvieron en el ejército, y saben lo que hacían en esas aldeas. Como tenían pocas posibilidades de seguir trabajando y en cierto caso se aburrían de estar en lo mismo, solo cultivando y no les tenía tanta ganancia, peor con esto de las tierras, entonces lo que hacían, era que unos se metían al ejército para tener mas posibilidades, así como mi papá que ahí en el ejército fue donde aprendió a leer y a escribir bien, y sacó un grado mas alto de estudio. El ejército le dio esas opciones”. En el mismo sentido, Jorge Luis Martínez, amigo de Mynor, dice que conoce un señor que es kaibil del ejército y le cuenta “sobre las masacres que hacían. Los señores que los dirigían solo les decían arrasen eso y no les importaba si eran, o no guerrilleros, arrasaban toda la comunidad, y a veces ellos pasaban días sin comer y cosas así. Fue bien dura esa época. También con eso del toque de queda, agarraban a muchas personas, a cualquiera que estuviera en la calle, lo agarraban y al ejército. Era muy difícil porque cualquiera si tenía papeles se los rompían y se lo llevaban, si andaban a cierta hora y a veces estos señores no sabían ni leer. Me cuenta un amigo que al revés tenía la cédula (el soldado) y se lo quería llevar, diciéndole que porque era narcotraficante o guerrillero. Se lo querían llevar solo así nomás y el soldado ni sabía leer ni nada, solo porque aquel era estudiante de la universidad”. Ilustrando las paradojas y las ambigüedades en estas interpretaciones de la guerra por jóvenes menores de veinte años, Alejandro Ortiz, estudiante de bachillerato en un instituto publico, dice que según su papá “que también estuvo en el ejército, era un infierno estar en esas batallas. El vio morir niños, señoras, ancianos. El ejército y la guerrilla en su afán por encontrarse arrasaban con cualquier persona que estuviera en medio. Si de este lado estaba el ejército, y del otro lado la guerrilla, y en medio hubieran niños de una aldea con ancianos y todo, ellos mataban a quien fuera, con tal de acabar con su enemigo. Yo creo que esto de las guerrillas surgió por las personas que se aburrieron de soportar a los malos gobiernos, se cansaron de dejarse de todo lo que ellos decían, que si el gobierno decía esto, el pueblo sumiso lo aceptaba y ellos ya no aguantaron eso. Por eso estuvieron en contra del ejército, y desde que se firmó la paz, sé esta viendo que el gobierno hace lo que quiere, si quiere aumenta los impuestos, pone impuestos a cualquier cosa y no hay ninguna fuerza que esté en contra de ello, o sea pueden hacer lo que se les de la gana”.

turmoil (McAllister 2002).

Many decades of institutional violence and dictatorship produced in Guatemala a national self that believes in the disciplinary virtues of punishment and coercive force. Political conservatism opposed to citizenship development and the State's modernization has propagated the idea that "el populacho tiene por novia la guillotina" (Guatemala Ilustrada 1894); "nuestros pueblos no están preparados para la democracia" (Rodas 1926) or "el estado de sitio se pone para controlar a un pueblo rebelde" (Ríos Montt 1982). Despite contemporary campaigns that promote respect for human rights and "peace culture", there is still the strong belief that punishment and institutional violence need to play an important role in organizing and disciplining society<sup>273</sup>. The hegemonic assumption is that Guatemala is a country full of lazy, drunk and illiterate Indians and Ladinos that need an *iron hand* to control them. The institutional practice of punishment and the social and physical suppression of deviants and outcasts still justify social cleansing and the politics of extermination of those considered criminals by the "public opinion".

Guatemala is a prime arena in which to examine authoritarian idiosyncrasies, the collapse of liberal democracy and the contradictions of applied social sciences aimed at dismantling revolutionary nationalism. Very often, anthropological studies about modern violence in Guatemala emphasize the genocide of the 1980s. However, reducing violence to genocide hides the earlier history and processes that were key factors for the strategic

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<sup>273</sup>Por ejemplo, para los canones de violencia nacional, los castigos que todavía se practican en las escuelas públicas y privadas se consideran livianos. Estos castigos incluyen la obligación de *hacer ejercicios, sentadillas o lagartijas*, estar parados más de una hora sin moverse o hincados sobre piedras o maíces, ser objeto de gritos, insultos, coscorriones, jalones de pelo, orejas, manotazos en la cara, la espalda, patadas, cinchazos y reglazos en las nalgas, las piernas y las manos. En muchas ocasiones los propios padres piden a los maestros castigar a sus hijos convencidos de que así serán mas obedientes o mejores estudiantes. Es frecuente en el caso de "niños rebeldes" escuchar a sus padres cederle a los maestros su autoridad para corregirlos con la frase "Aquí se lo traigo con todo y nalgas". En ocasiones cuando el responsable no confiesa la falta se castiga a culpables e inocentes por parejo. Los infractores reincidentes generalmente limpian los baños, los corredores, los patios, el salón de clase, lavan trastos o bien escriben quinientas o las veces que sean "*No debo decir...*" o hacer tal cosa.

decision of executing such genocide. To reduce “la violencia” to genocide, or to the 36 years of armed conflict, erases phenomena, such as the long and complex history of racism and discrimination, the failure of the dominant class to become the leading class, the social memory of previous dictatorship and military rule, the process that transformed the Guatemalan Army into the leading institution of the State and the role of US as a local actor. The origins of “la violencia” in many ways can be related to the moment when General Ubico asked his US military advisors to make the *Escuela Politécnica* “lo mas parecido a West Point” (Karlen 1994). Ubico was not able to anticipate that the Guatemalan West Point graduates would be in charge of removing him from office, and years later, destabilize Arévalo and Arbenz’s administrations; to organize the first anti-imperialist guerrillas in the early 1960s and to execute the genocide of the 1980s. Violence as well racism in Guatemala should be explained in its multiple manifestations in relation to the political economy of Cold War and counterinsurgency. If the human devastation observable in Guatemala is the result of US anti-communist paranoia, or if we have a case of “political suicide” (Dunkerley 1992), the truth is that the origin of such a structural dislocation can not be found exclusively in the Indian-Ladino dichotomy or in the fact suggested by David Stoll (1993) that indigenous communities were trapped *between two fires*, but in the long process of regressive modernization that was consolidated after 1954 thanks to the ascension of the Army and the role of the US as a local actor. The interclass and intercultural belief in the political necessity of dictatorship in combination with US imperialism and the racism that pervades not only the mentality of the ruling elite but also the actions of the Criollo and the Ladino Left, complicate the future of Guatemala’s institutional development and the formation of new sensibilities more receptive to social justice and multicultural democracy.

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